# STATE OF PR IN AFRICA

# REPORT

**Rewriting Influence:** How AI and Digital First Media are reshaping Public Relations in Africa's Revolution

## 2026
### EDITION

info@glasshousepr.co.ke

www.glasshousepr.co.ke

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GLASSHOUSEPR | **13** YEARS OF TELLING YOUR STORY

# |EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Rewriting Influence: AI and Digital-First Media in African Public Relations

The age of AI and digital-first media is upon us. Technology now evolves faster than it is adopted: while the transition from writing to the printing press took nearly **4,500 years**, and from the press to email in just over five centuries, today information can be created and distributed globally in seconds. This acceleration introduces both democratization and disruption, reshaping how influence is built and Sustained.

In 2026, the convergence of artificial intelligence and digital-first media has shifted beyond to become the operating system of the PR industry. AI is no longer a peripheral tool but an **agentic force**, autonomously managing workflows, media distribution, and consumer transactions. For Africa, this transformation is both an opportunity and a challenge: the continent's youthful population positions it as a driver of innovation, yet, lack of African-cantered datasets and infrastructure ownership risks widening the digital divide.

## Study Overview

Public relations in Africa is being reshaped by two converging forces; the rapid integration of AI tools and the growing dominance of digital first storytelling platforms. Insights from agencies, seasoned practitioners and students, (the next generation of PR talent,) highlight a profession in transition. This report explores the current state of public relations across the continent and AI influence on communication, media, academia and journalism sectors.

We employed a mixed methods approach, the study combines quantitative research, thought leader interviews, and desk analysis. This methodology captures the pulse of the industry through the voices of practitioners, students and academic stakeholders, presenting a comprehensive view of PR's evolving landscape in Africa.

We interviewed **54 agencies** from across **16 African countries**. These respondents represent a collective workforce of approximately **6,500** to **7,800** professionals, hailing from a diverse ecosystem that includes global giants like Weber Shandwick, regional leaders such as Global Media Alliance and DNA Brand Architects, and agile boutique consultancies. This robust agency data is enriched by in-depth interviews with pioneering thought leaders shaping the strategic future of African communication, alongside a survey of 80 students from seven universities in Kenya.

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The report spans **North, Central, East, Southern, and West Africa**, offering a **Pan-African** view of the industry from leading markets to emerging talent.

# Mary Njoki
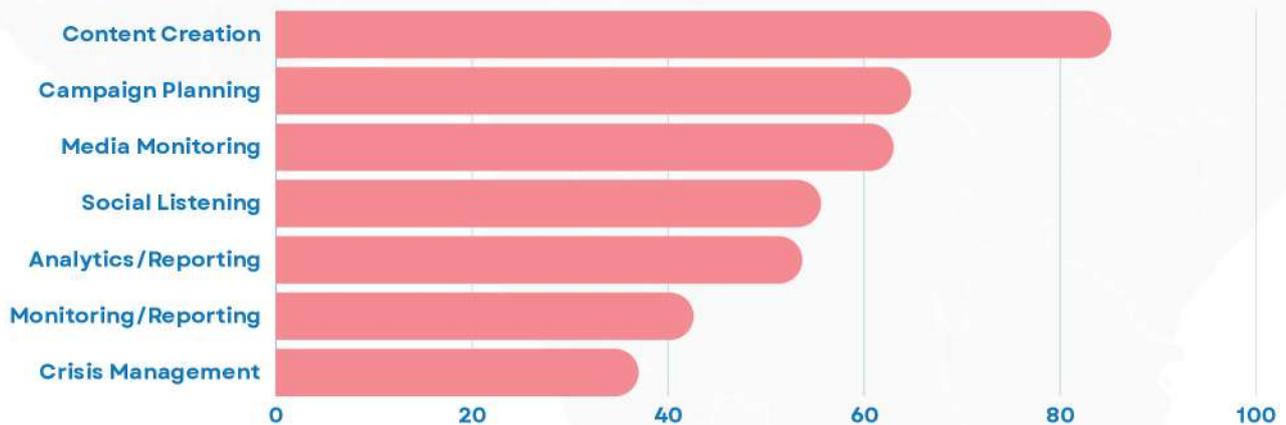
**Founder & CEO, Glass House PR**

# KEY FINDINGS

10 critical insights from across 16 African countries revealing how AI and digital-first media are transforming the PR landscape

## 1

**AI has evolved from an experimental tool into a core industry practice, driven by exceptionally high adoption rates in African PR.**

| | |
|---|---|
| **81.5%** | **3.7%** |
| VERY FAMILIAR & ACTIVELY USING AI | AWARE BUT NOT USING |

The report shows a massive adoption rate, with 81.5% of senior professionals describing themselves as "very familiar" and actively using tools like ChatGPT and Gemini.

### STRATEGIC IMPACT AREAS



Horizontal bar chart showing:
- Content Creation: ~85
- Campaign Planning: ~63
- Media Monitoring: ~62
- Social Listening: ~55
- Analytics/Reporting: ~53
- Monitoring/Reporting: ~43
- Crisis Management: ~37

(Axis from 0 to 100)

## 2

**Gen Z Leads the Industry in AI Adoption, Treating It as a Standard Baseline Rather Than an Emerging Tool**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **97.5%** | **90%** | **63.8%** |
| GEN Z USING AI TOOLS | CHATGPT ADOPTION | CREATED PR CONTENT USING AI |

Among students and next generation (Gen Z), 97.5% use AI tools, with ChatGPT adopted by 90%, confirming that AI is now a baseline capability rather than a differentiator.

PRIMARY USES BY GEN Z STUDENTS



### 3 Generative AI Has Become the Primary Content Engine in the PR Industry; the Industry Is Also Evolving from Traditional SEO to GEO

**90.7%**

USE AI WRITING ASSISTANTS

**81.5%**

USE AI DESIGN TOOLS

The creation of content, traditionally the most time-consuming aspect of PR, has been revolutionized. 90.7% of professionals now use AI writing assistants (ChatGPT, Jasper), and 81.5% use AI design tools (Midjourney, Canva AI). This indicates the industry has moved to a "hybrid creative" model where drafting and visual asset creation are AI-assisted standard practices.

**From SEO to GEO:** As users increasingly turn to AI tools for answers instead of traditional search engines, PR strategies are shifting from optimizing for **"clicks"** to optimizing for **"citations"** in AI-generated responses.

| ChatGPT | Midjourney | Jasper | Canva |
|---|---|---|---|
| TOP WRITING TOOL | TOP DESIGN TOOL | AI WRITING | AI DESIGN |

# 4    AI Augments PR and Accelerates It but Cannot Replace the Human Nuance

> "AI enhances, but does not replace, human creativity and emotional intelligence."
>
> — 74.1% of respondents agree (55.6% strongly agreeing)

| 74.1% | 55.6% | 16.7% |
|---|---|---|
| AGREE AI ENHANCES, NOT REPLACES | STRONGLY AGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE |
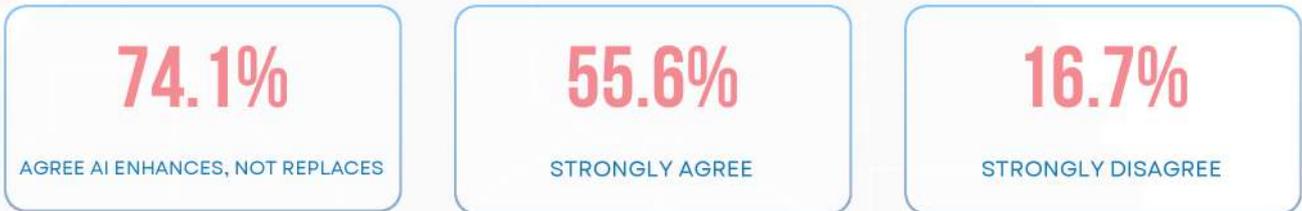
Senior leaders view AI as a force multiplier for strategy rather than a substitute for talent. This indicates a mature understanding of AI's role in the industry.

## STUDENT PERSPECTIVE ON AI & AUTHENTICITY

| 42.5% | 38.8% | 18.8% |
|---|---|---|
| REDUCES AUTHENTICITY | ENHANCES AUTHENTICITY | NEUTRAL |

# 5    While AI Usage Is Surging in the PR Industry, It Is Accompanied by Significant Apprehension Regarding Its Implications

## GEN Z: VALUE VS. FEAR

| 92.5% | 76.3% | 80% | 77.5% |
|---|---|---|---|
| CITE TIME SAVINGS | CREATIVITY BOOST | FEAR OVER RELIANCE | LOSS OF ORIGINALITY |

## INDUSTRY RESPONSE: SAFEGUARD POLICIES

| 48.1% | 42.6% | 58.8% |
|---|---|---|
| MANDATORY HUMAN OVERSIGHT POLICIES | TRANSPARENCY POLICIES (INFORM CLIENTS) | GEN Z SPOTLIGHT ETHICAL RISKS |

# 6  Algorithm Volatility Has Become a Critical Industry Disruptor

**70.4%**

IMPACTED BY ALGORITHM CHANGES

**29.6%**

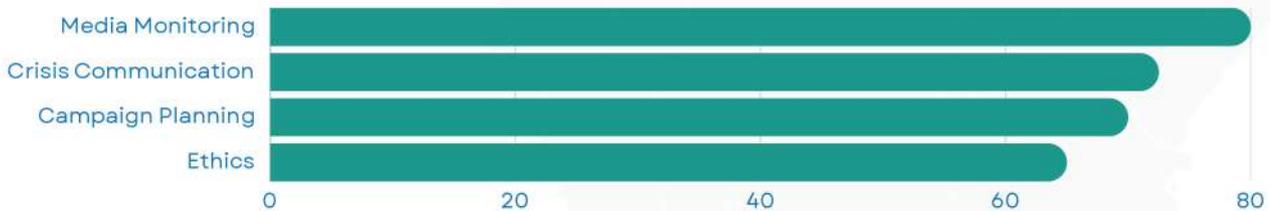DESCRIBED IMPACT AS SIGNIFICANT

Agencies are struggling with the instability of third-party platforms. 70.4% of respondents reported that algorithm changes and platform policies (e.g., from Meta or Google) impacted their campaign outcomes in the past year. This highlights the risk of relying too heavily on rented land (social platforms) versus owned media.

> **58.8% of Gen Z students spotlight ethical risks tied to misinformation and algorithmic bias, reinforcing the need for platform diversification and owned media strategies.**

# 7  Digital Storytelling Marks a Paradigm Shift While Digital Platforms Reveal the Generational Split

Practitioners increasingly emphasise participatory dialogue, cultural fluency, emotional resonance, and multimedia agility over broadcast messaging. Students reinforce this shift, calling for AI integration across key areas.

## STUDENTS CALL FOR AI INTEGRATION IN:



Horizontal bar chart. Categories from top to bottom: Media Monitoring (~80), Crisis Communication (~72), Campaign Planning (~70), Ethics (~65). X-axis: 0, 20, 40, 60, 80.

## THE GENERATIONAL PLATFORM SPLIT

**PRACTITIONERS**

| LinkedIn | 92.6% |
| OWNED BLOG | 70.4% |

**GEN Z**

| INSTAGRAM | 77.5% |
| TikTok | 76.3% |
| WhatsApp | 58.8% |
| X/TWITTER | 55% |

> This suggests a decisive pivot toward B2B storytelling, thought leadership, and corporate reputation management over generic social networking.

# 8  AI Will Drive Hyper-Localization of African Narratives

### 40.7%

PREDICT AI WILL ENABLE HYPER-
LOCALIZATION

One of the most promising future impacts identified is cultural relevance. 40.7% of respondents predict AI will enable "hyper-localization" of content, allowing agencies to scale storytelling across Africa's diverse languages and cultural contexts (e.g., using local slang or specific cultural references) more efficiently than ever before

> AI-powered hyper-localization will allow agencies to scale storytelling across Africa's diverse **languages** and **cultural contexts**, using local slang and specific cultural references more efficiently than ever before.

# 9  Learning Outpaces Teaching; Curriculum Demands Mirror Industry Reality

AI adoption in PR is advancing faster than education can keep up. Practitioners with over a decade of experience (59.3%) are integrating AI through self-directed learning rather than formal training, while Gen Z students mirror this DIY approach

### 59.3%

SELF-DIRECTED AI LEARNING

### 66.3%

CONFIDENT IN ETHICAL AI USE

### 61.3%

ENCOUNTERED AI IN
COURSEWORK

**The result:** Education is playing catch-up with industry, even as every proposed AI integration in PR curricula was endorsed by at least **61%** of students. Together, these findings reveal a generational push for institutions to align with the realities of practice.

# 10  Credibility Is Measured in Quality, Not Quantity: The New Brand Trust Equation

AI is now generating content at scale while brand trust has become the definitive currency of the public relations industry. The focus has shifted from volume to value, where brand trust is no longer built on how many people see a message, but on how deeply they believe it

## THE NEW TRUST METRICS

| **33.3%** SENTIMENT ANALYSIS | **27.8%** DEPTH OF ENGAGEMENT | **24.1%** DIRECT FEEDBACK | **20.4%** ORGANIC AMPLIFICATION |
|---|---|---|---|

> "Practitioners are redefining credibility, moving away from vanity metrics to measure what truly sustains reputation. This aligns seamlessly with Gen Z students, who view trust as non-negotiable; they champion authenticity, originality, and ethical safeguards as the only viable defence for brand integrity in an AI-saturated landscape."
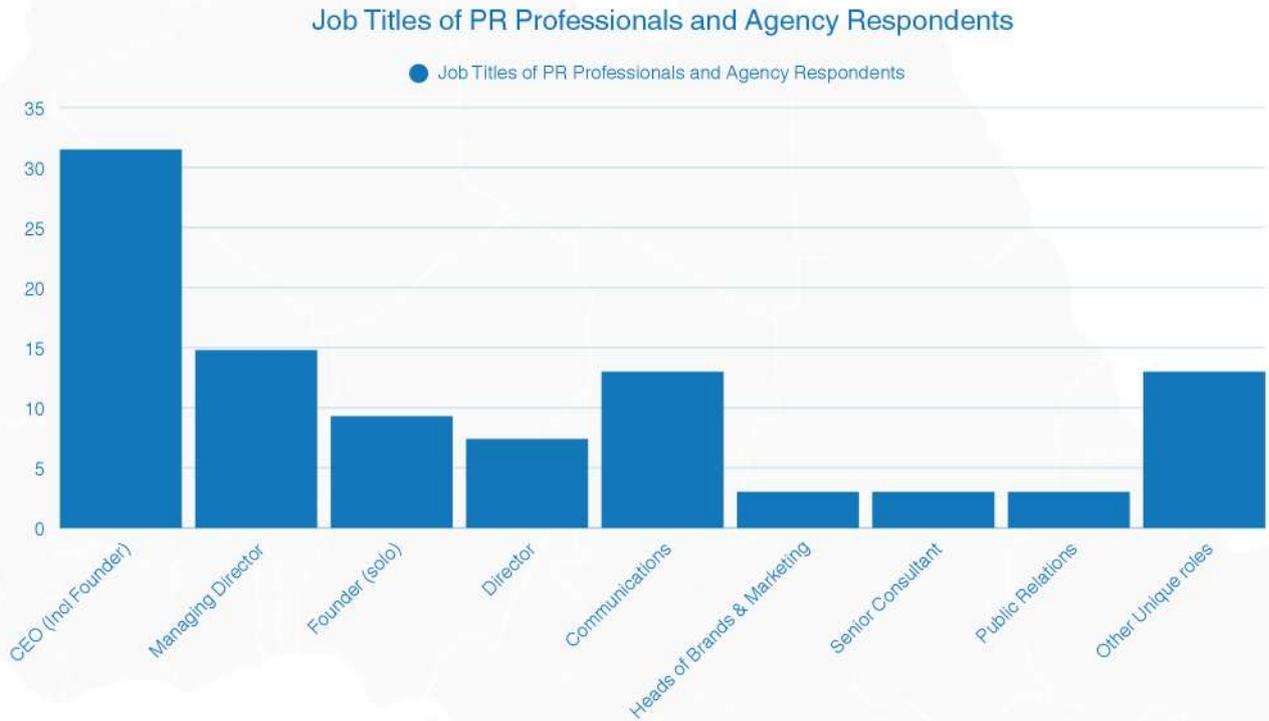
| **✕ Volume / Vanity Metrics** | **>>>** | **✓ Value / Resonance** |
|---|---|---|
| How many people see it | | How deeply they believe it |

# PR AGENCIES

GLASSHOUSEPR

13 **YEARS** OF TELLING YOUR STORY

# |AGENCIES/PRACTITIONERS

## Job Titles of PR Professionals and Agency Respondents

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● Job Titles of PR Professionals and Agency Respondents



### Key Findings

The survey captured a highly senior and entrepreneurial group of PR practitioners in Africa.

- One-third (**31.5%**) are CEOs, with an additional **9.3%** being solo founders together, **40.8%** lead their own agencies or companies.
- Another **14.8%** are Managing Directors or Managing Partners, reinforcing the executive-level dominance.
- Mid-level communications roles (Officers, Specialists, Leads) make up **13.0%**, while Directors account for **7.4%**.
- The remaining respondents hold diverse specialised titles, including heads of brands/marketing communications, senior consultants, and country heads.

## Type of Organizations Represented

### Type of Organization Represented by Respondents

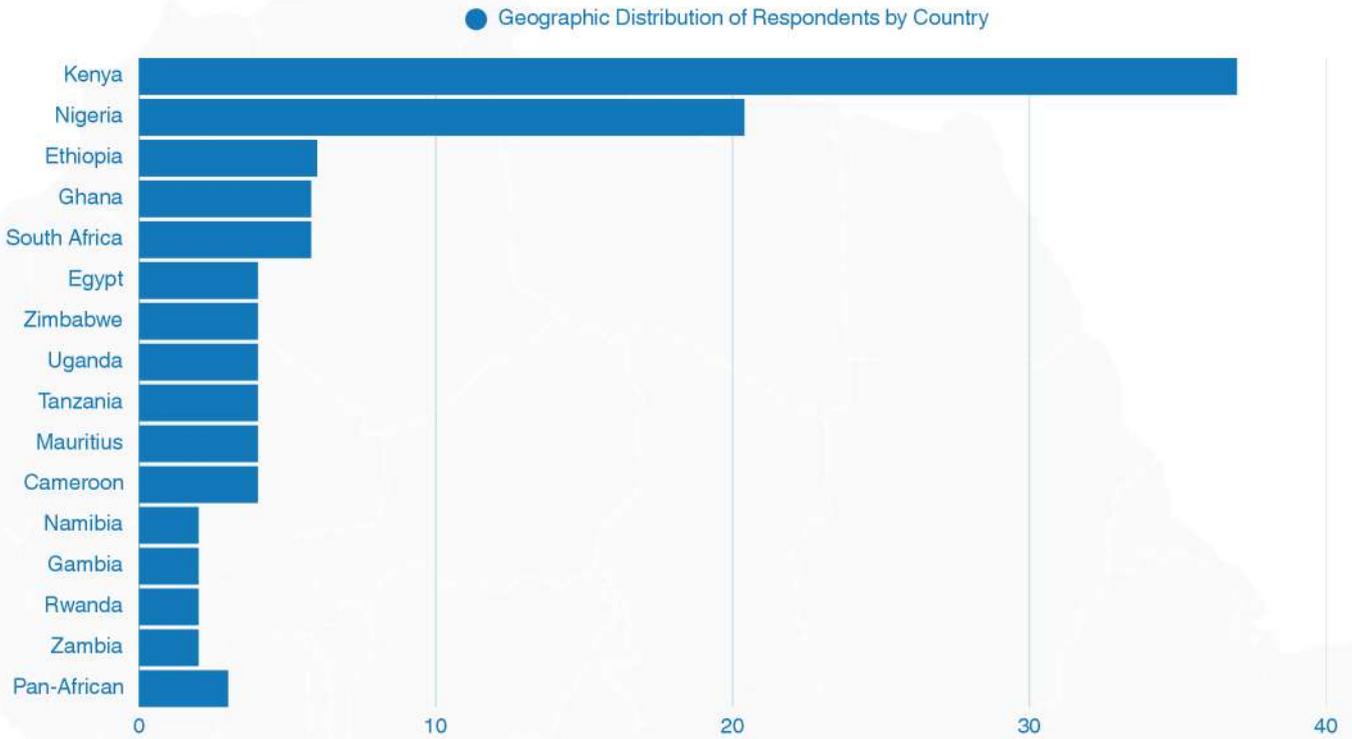● Type of Organization Represented by Respondents
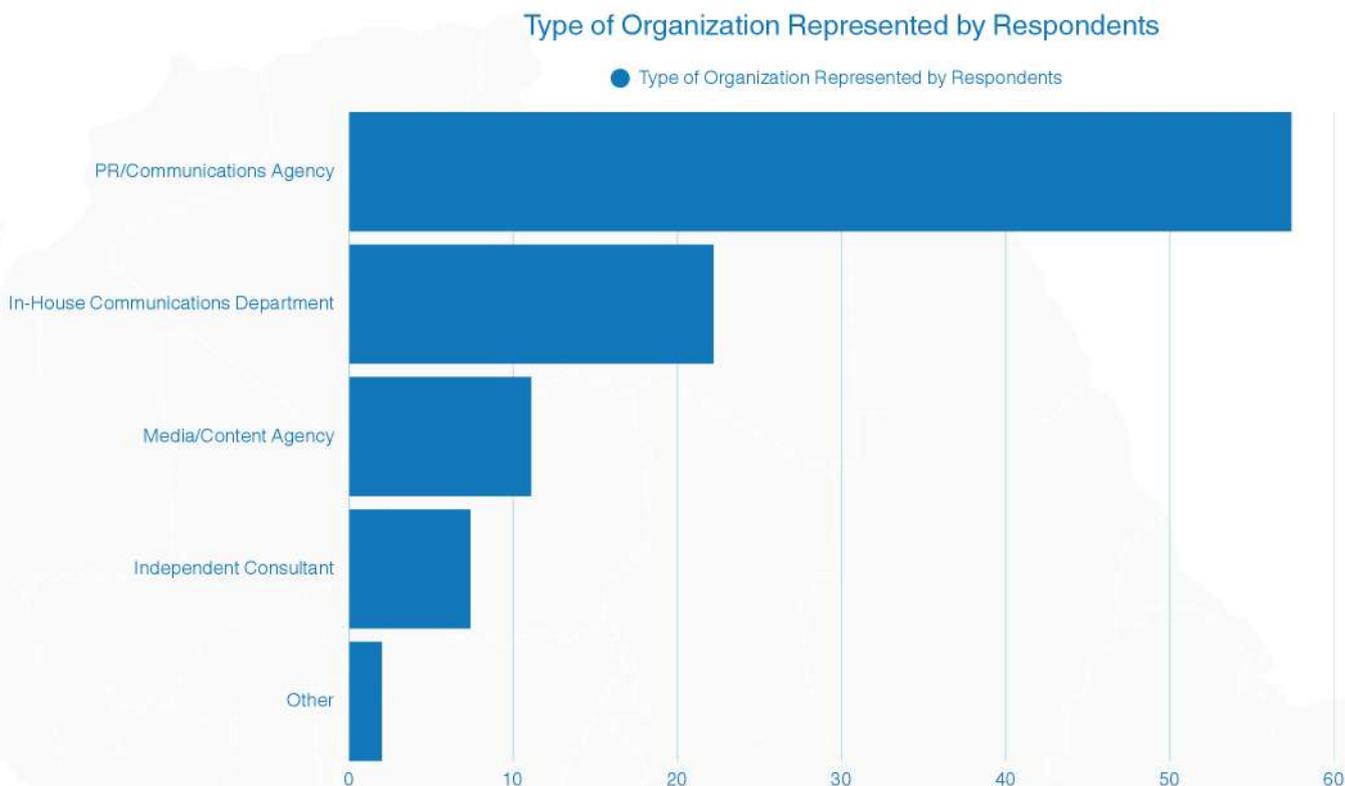


### Key Findings

- The survey sample overwhelmingly represents the agency network, with 57.4% of respondents working at a PR/communications agency (including creative, marketing & communications, and strategic agencies).

- In-house communications departments account for 22.2%, providing a strong corporate perspective.

- Media/content agencies make up 11.1%, while independent consultants represent 7.4%. One respondent is Not specified.

This distribution gives the study a clear agency bias, with over half the insights coming from professionals who sell and deliver PR services to clients, with a substantial minority offering the client-side (in-house) viewpoint. The results therefore reflect current practices and attitudes primarily in the African PR agency ecosystem, complemented by corporate communicators.

## Geographical Distribution of Respondents.

### Geographic Distribution of Respondents by Country

● Geographic Distribution of Respondents by Country

| Country | |
|---|---|
| Kenya | |
| Nigeria | |
| Ethiopia | |
| Ghana | |
| South Africa | |
| Egypt | |
| Zimbabwe | |
| Uganda | |
| Tanzania | |
| Mauritius | |
| Cameroon | |
| Namibia | |
| Gambia | |
| Rwanda | |
| Zambia | |
| Pan-African | |

0     10     20     30     40

### Key Findings

- The survey reflects a strong East and West African focus, with Kenya dominating at 37.0%, followed by Nigeria at 20.4% . Together, these two countries account for 57.4% of the sample. Ethiopia, Ghana, and South Africa each contribute around 5–6%, adding important regional voices from Addis Ababa, Accra, Johannesburg, and Pretoria.

- The remaining respondents are spread across 10 other African countries (Egypt, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Tanzania, Mauritius, Cameroon, Namibia, Gambia, Rwanda, Zambia) plus two pan-African respondents.

## Years of Experience in PR/Communications

### Years of Experience in PR/Communications Among Respondents

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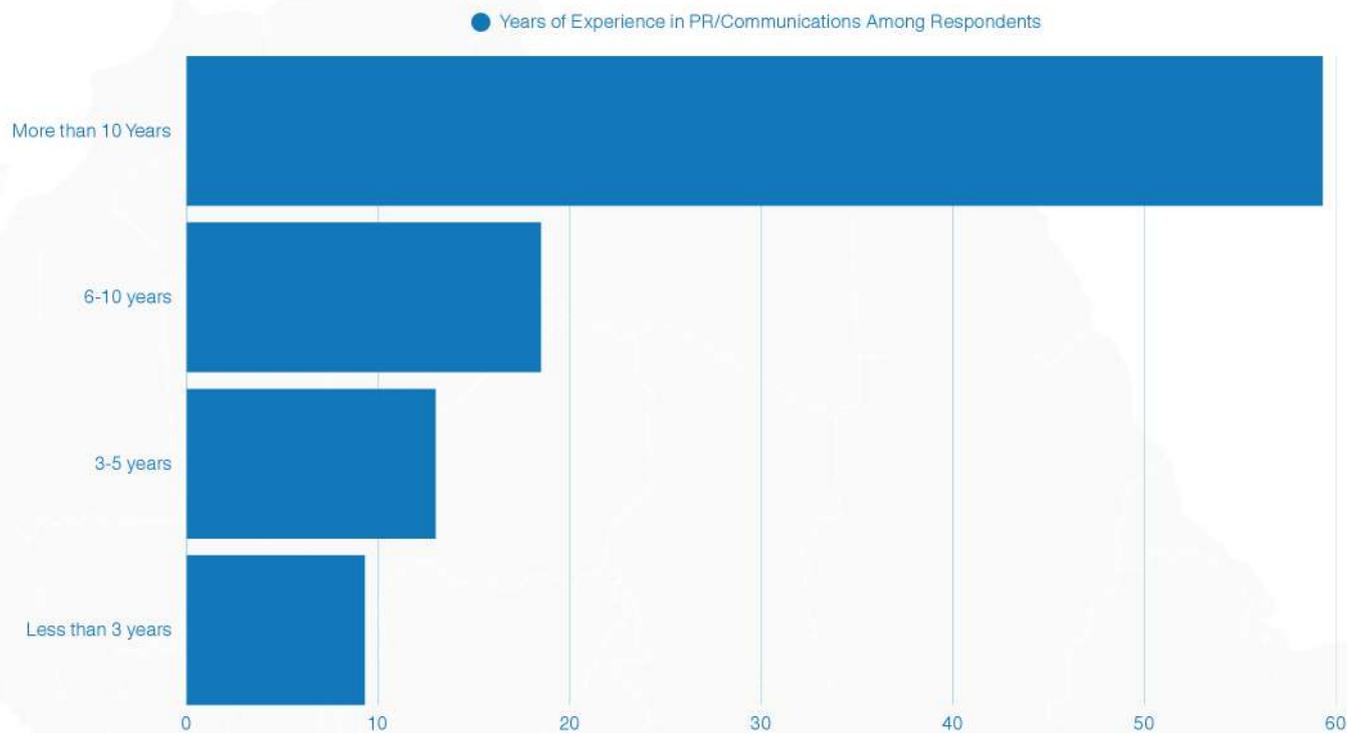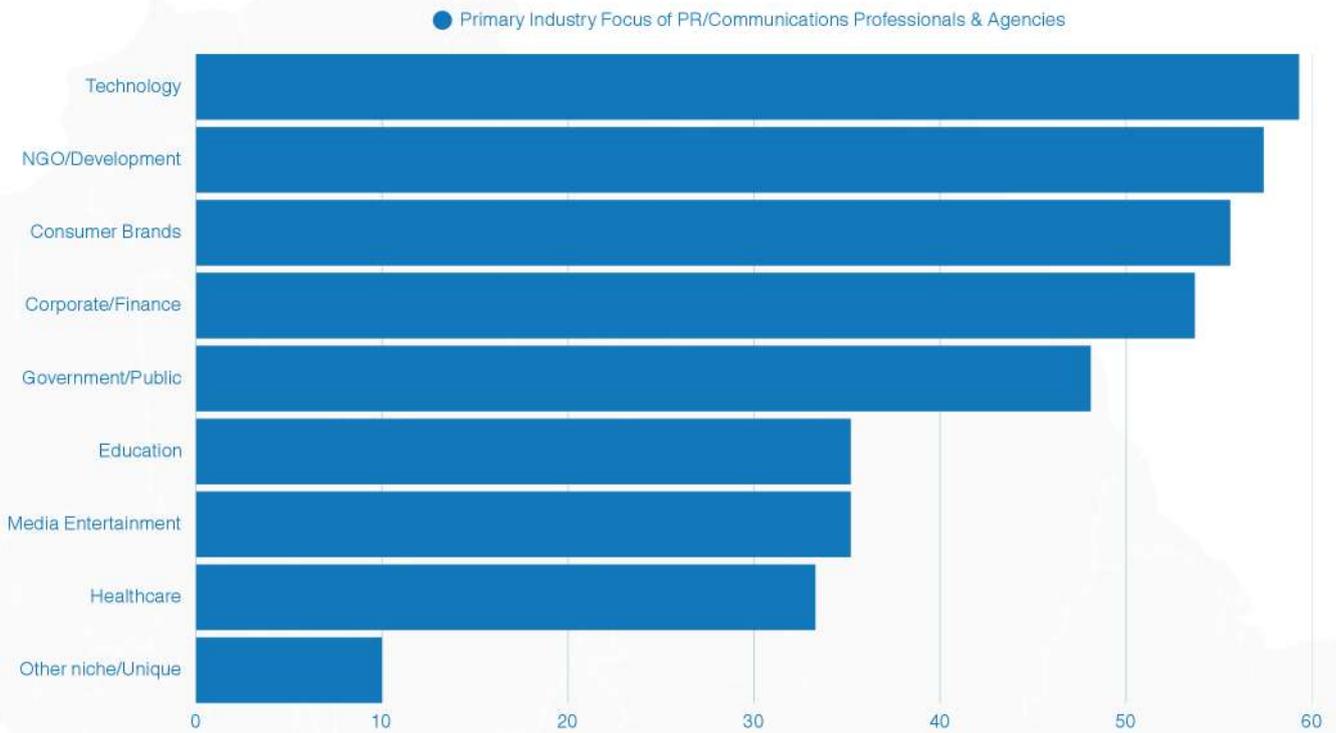


## Key Findings

- The respondent pool is remarkably seasoned: nearly six in ten (59.3%) have more than 10 years of experience in PR/communications, indicating deep industry expertise.

- Another 18.5% fall in the 6–10 years bracket, bringing the proportion with more than 6 years of experience to 77.8%.

- Mid-level practitioners (3–5 years) represent 13.0%, while only 9.3% have less than 3 years of experience.

- The views expressed come predominantly from long-established leaders who have witnessed the evolution of PR practice over a decade or more.

**Primary Industry Focus**

### Primary Industry Focus of PR/Communications Professionals & Agencies

● Primary Industry Focus of PR/Communications Professionals & Agencies



## Key Findings

- Respondents operate across a highly diversified portfolio of sectors, with no single industry dominating overwhelmingly.

- Technology/Innovation leads slightly (59.3%), closely followed by NGO/Development (57.4%), Consumer Brands (55.6%), and Corporate/Finance (53.7%).

- Government/Public Sector is also strongly represented (48.1%), reflecting the importance of public affairs and policy communications in the African context.

- Creative and social-impact areas such as Education and Media Entertainment & Lifestyle each appear in 35.2% of responses, while Healthcare follows at 33.3%.

- This broad spread indicates that PR agencies and professionals in the sample serve clients across almost the entire economic and social spectrum from high-growth tech and finance to development/NGO work, government relations, consumer-facing brands, and emerging sectors like sustainable mobility and youth empowerment. The diversity underscores the versatility demanded of modern African PR practitioners.

## Familiarity with AI Tools in Communication

### Familiarity with AI Tools in Communication Among PR Professionals & Agencies

● How Familiar are you with AI Tools in Communication
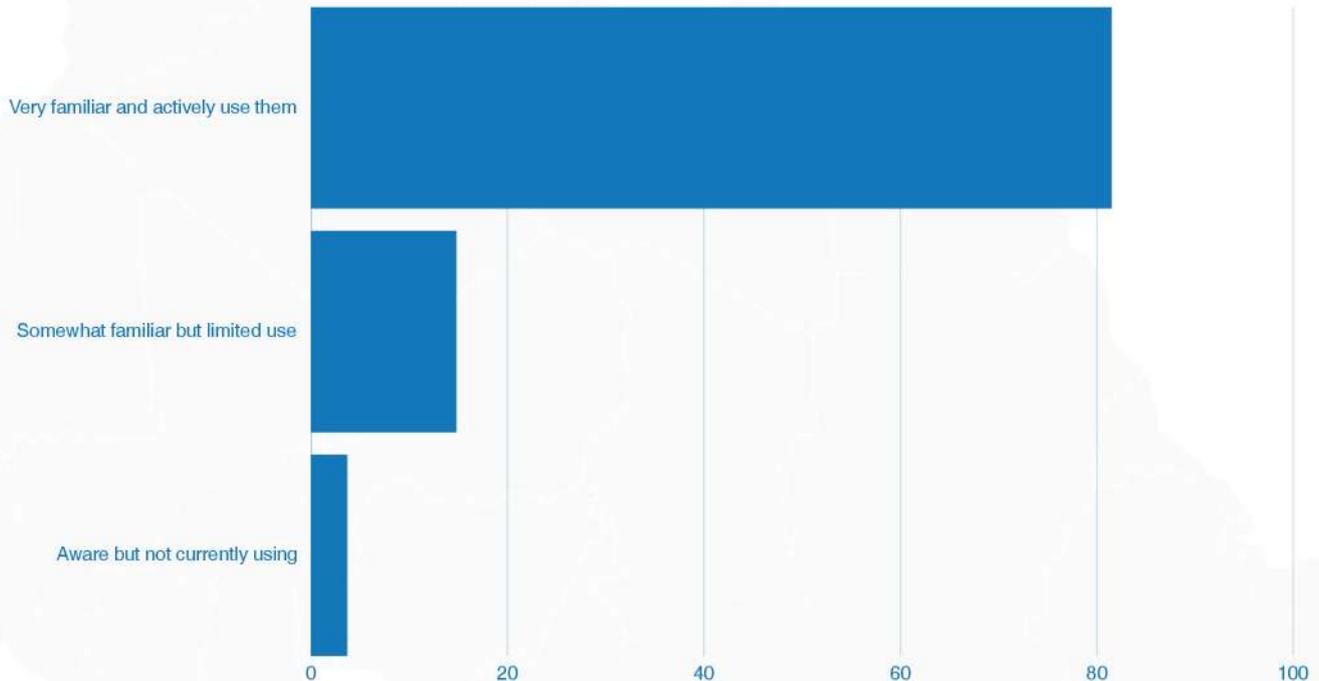


## Key Findings

- AI tool adoption is exceptionally high among this group of senior PR and communications professionals.

- A striking 81.5% describe themselves as very familiar and actively using tools like ChatGPT, Gemini, Copilot, Grok, Adobe Firefly, and similar platforms in their daily work.

- Only 14.8% report being somewhat familiar with limited use, and a tiny 3.7% are merely aware but not currently using them.

- This near-universal active engagement indicates that AI has already moved beyond experimentation into core operational practice for the vast majority of respondents most of whom are experienced leaders (59.3% with >10 years in PR). The level of familiarity and usage far exceeds what is typically seen even in tech-forward industries, underscoring how quickly AI has become mainstream in African PR and agency environments.

## Current Use of Specific AI Tools/Platforms in PR Work

### Points Current Use of Specific AI Tools/Platforms in PR Work

● Current Use of Specific AI Tools/Platforms in PR Work
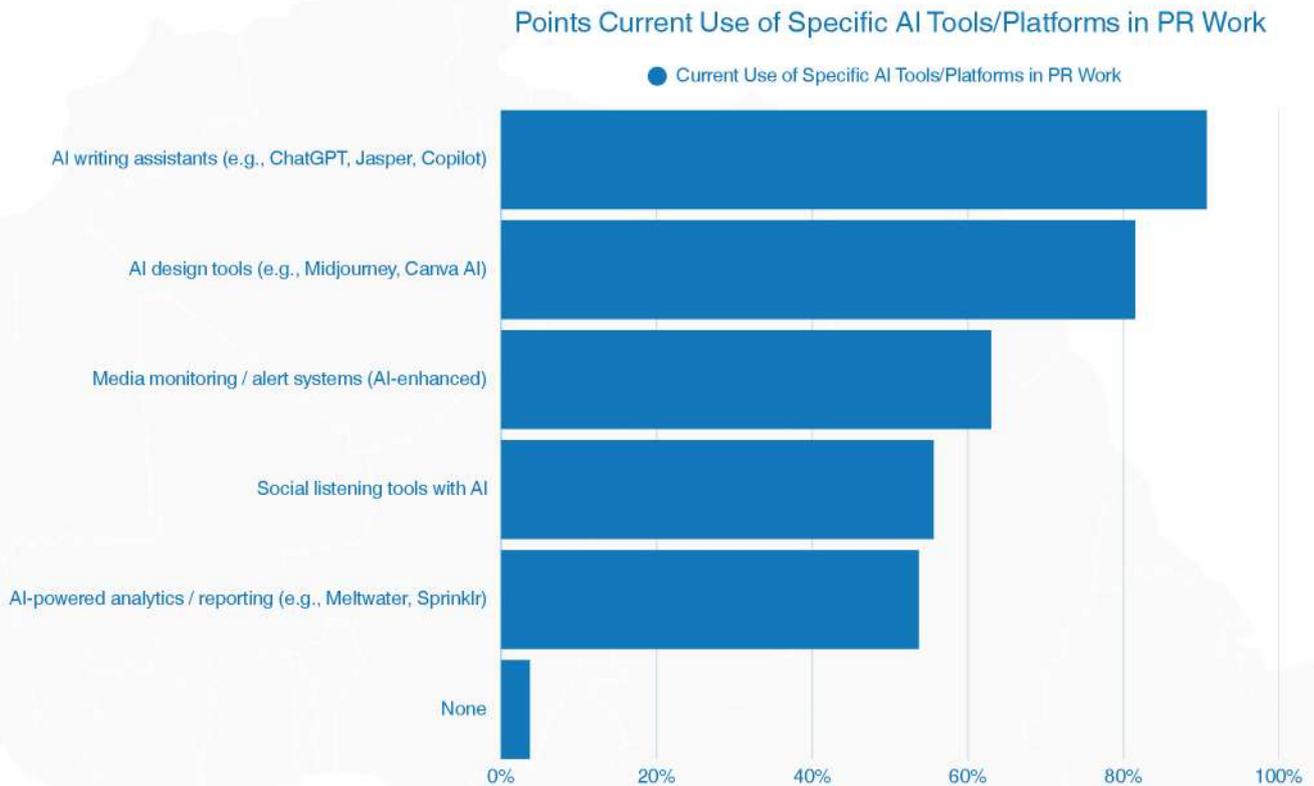


## Key Findings

- AI tool adoption among PR professionals and agencies is extremely high and spans multiple functional areas.

- AI writing assistants lead overwhelmingly with 90.7% usage ChatGPT, Copilot, and Jasper are clearly the workhorses for content drafting, ideation, press releases, and messaging.

- AI design tools (Midjourney, Canva AI, etc.) follow very closely at 81.5%, demonstrating that visual content creation (graphics, social media assets, campaign visuals) is now a core AI application in the field.

- Media monitoring/alert systems (63.0%) and social listening tools with AI (55.6%) are widely integrated for real-time reputation management and audience insights.

- AI-powered analytics/reporting platforms (Meltwater, Sprinklr, etc.) are used by just over half (53.7%).

- Only 2 respondents (3.7%) report using none of these tools.

The results show that AI is not experimental it has become a standard, multi-tool ecosystem in modern PR practice, particularly for content creation (writing + design) and intelligence/monitoring functions.

## Areas Where AI Has Most Impacted Communication Strategies

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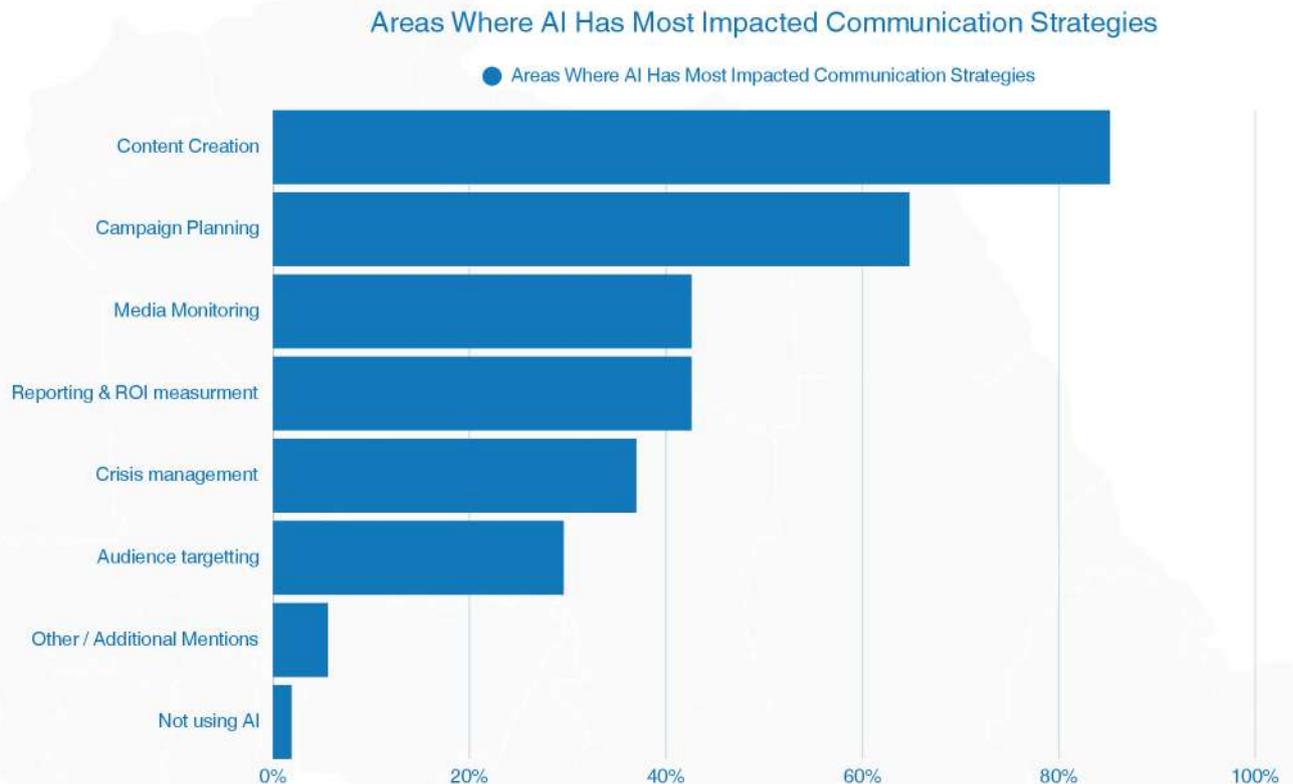


## Key Findings

- AI's influence on PR and communication strategies is overwhelmingly concentrated in creative and operational execution.

- Content creation stands out as the single most transformed area, cited by 85.2% of respondents — confirming that generative AI (especially writing and design tools) has fundamentally changed how professionals draft, ideate, and produce messaging.

- Campaign planning follows strongly at 64.8%, indicating AI is now a core strategic partner for brainstorming, structuring, and optimizing campaigns.

- Media monitoring and Reporting & ROI measurement tie for third place (both 42.6%), reflecting AI's growing role in intelligence gathering and performance tracking.

- Crisis management (37.0%) and Audience targeting (29.6%) are also significantly impacted, though less frequently than content and planning.

- Only 1 respondent (1.9%) reports no AI impact ("Not using AI").

The data clearly shows that AI is reshaping the day-to-day creative heart of PR (content and campaigns) beyond purely analytical or crisis functions a pattern consistent with the high adoption of writing and design tools.

## AI Enhances, But Does Not Replace, Human Creativity And Emotional Intelligence in Public Relations"

Agreement with the statement "AI enhances, but does not replace, human creativity and emotional intelligence in public relations"

● AI enhances, but does not replace, human creativity and emotional intelligence in public relations
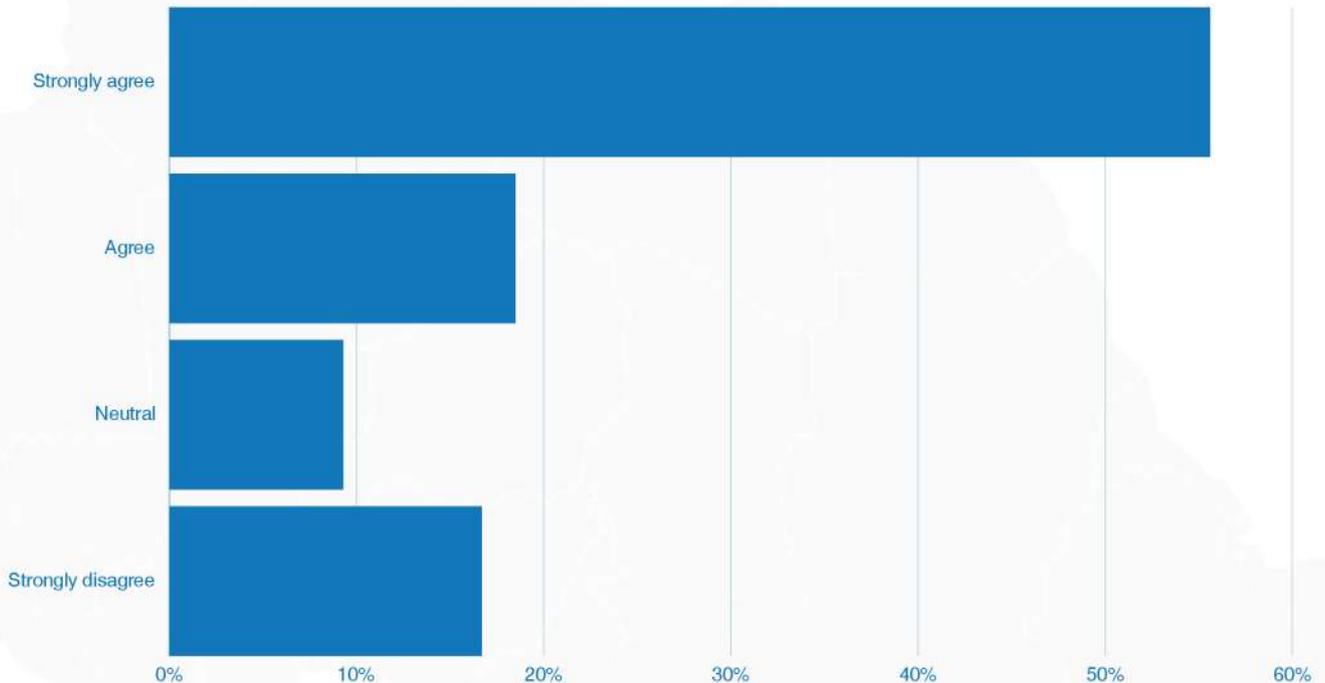


## Key Findings

- A clear majority of PR professionals and agency leaders strongly support the view that AI serves as an enhancer rather than a replacement for human creativity and emotional intelligence in public relations.

- 55.6% strongly agree with the statement, and when combined with those who agree (18.5%), a total of 74.1% believe AI augments rather than supplants the uniquely human elements of the profession.

- Only 16.7% strongly disagree (no respondents selected "Disagree"), while 9.3% remain neutral.

- This overwhelming endorsement from a highly experienced cohort (59.3% with >10 years in PR) suggests that most practitioners see AI as a powerful ally capable of accelerating ideation, drafting, and analysis but one that still requires the irreplaceable human judgment, empathy and strategic storytelling that define effective public relations.

## Primary Digital-First Channels Used for Storytelling and Campaigns

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● Primary Digital-First Channels Used for Storytelling and Campaigns



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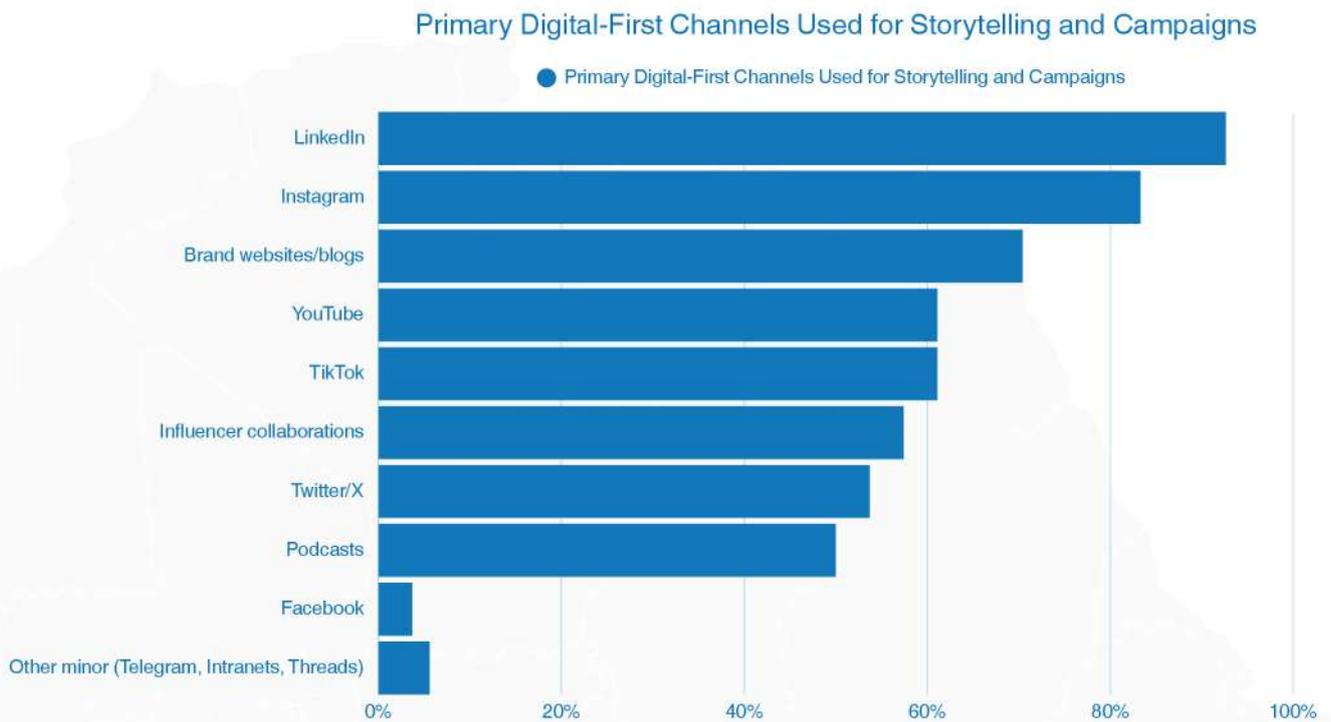
## Key Findings

- LinkedIn emerges as the clear dominant platform, used by an overwhelming 92.6% of PR professionals and agencies reflecting its central role in professional networking, thought leadership, B2B storytelling, and stakeholder engagement in the African context.

- Instagram follows strongly at 83.3%, underscoring its importance for visual, consumer-facing, and lifestyle-oriented campaigns.

- Brand websites/blogs rank third (70.4%), highlighting the continued value of owned media for in-depth storytelling and credibility.

- YouTube and TikTok tie at 61.1% each, showing significant investment in long- and short-form video content.

- Influencer collaborations (57.4%) and Twitter/X (53.7%) remain key for amplification and real-time engagement, while Podcasts (50.0%) indicate growing audio storytelling adoption.

- Traditional platforms like Facebook appear minimally (3.7%), and niche channels (Telegram, Threads, Intranets) are rare.

Overall, the data paints a picture of a professional-first, visual-heavy, owned-content strategy — with LinkedIn as the cornerstone, Instagram for reach, and a balanced mix of video, podcasts, and influencers for dynamic storytelling.

# HOW PRACTITIONERS APPROACH DIGITAL STORYTELLING DIFFERENTLY FROM TRADITIONAL PR/MEDIA

The open ended question responses reveal a clear and consistent shift in how African PR and communications professionals conceptualise digital storytelling. While traditional PR remains relevant, digital storytelling is widely viewed as a philosophical, structural, and operational evolution rather than a simple channel extension.

## 1 FROM ONE-WAY BROADCASTS TO TWO-WAY DIALOGUE

Traditional PR is often described as a monologue issuing press releases, pitching to journalists, and hoping for coverage. Respondents consistently contrasted this with digital storytelling's interactive nature:

> *The shift from traditional PR to digital storytelling represents a move from a monologue to a dialogue*

> *Old-school PR is a one-way street send out a press release and call it a day. We're all about conversation.*

> *Digital storytelling demands participation, connection, not just publication.*

Instead of controlling narratives, practitioners invite audiences to participate, co-create, and shape the story in real time.

## 2 AUDIENCE-CENTRIC AND CULTURALLY ROOTED

Digital storytelling is framed as deeply audience-driven, tailored to demographics, platforms, and cultural contexts. A Tanzanian agency explained:

> *We weave in Tanzanian culture, think Swahili slang, local humor, or tales of everyday heroes like a mama in Dodoma running her own business.*

> *Digital storytelling is realtime and captures authentic stories as they come. They don't require much planning and overthinking.*

> *Through audience analysis, I'm able to target different audiences based on age groups, language, and social media platforms.*

This emphasis on cultural fluency ensures resonance and authenticity, moving beyond generic messaging.

## 3 VISUALS, MULTIMEDIA, AND PLATFORM FLUENCY

Respondents highlighted the dominance of visual formats and platform-specific strategies:

> *Every message is designed to work on social media, news sites, and mobile before thinking about print.*

> *We go big on visuals, think colorful Instagram reels, catchy memes, or quick videos that scream Tanzania.*

> *Without high-quality imagery and video content that may be more associated with digital storytelling, it's harder to achieve top-tier media coverage.*

> *Digital storytelling is all about sharing lively, interactive stories that grab attention online.*

Short-form video, infographics, and interactive content (polls, quizzes, watch parties) are now central to storytelling.

## 4 AGILITY THROUGH DATA AND ANALYTICS

Unlike traditional PR, which often measures success through coverage and mentions, digital storytelling is firmly rooted in measurability and agility.

> *We use digital analytics engagement rates, click-throughs, sentiment tracking to first plan, then adjust campaigns in real time.*

> *With over 50 million mobile users in Tanzania, we've got a goldmine of insights.*

> *We continuously refine content and engagement strategies in response to evolving platform algorithms to ensure precise targeting.*

> *Digital storytelling allows me to review what people are saying about my campaign and measure impact.*

This agility allows practitioners to drop what isn't working and double down on what resonates.

## 5 AUTHENTICITY AND EMOTIONAL RESONANCE

Respondents repeatedly emphasized authenticity, relatability, and emotional connection:

> *Digital storytelling prioritises emotional connection... using personal organic stories, customer experiences, and influencers to enhance brand trust.*

> *I build for emotion first, platform purpose second, and format last.*

> *Digital storytelling is more about building a community around a story than simply broadcasting it*

> *We've shifted from announcing brand stories to co-creating them with audiences.*

## 6 INTEGRATION OF AI AND EMERGING PRACTICES

Some practitioners are already experimenting with AI-powered content creation and optimization:

- **AI-powered content creation:**

  ❝ *We approach digital storytelling by blending data-driven insights, AI-powered content creation, and platform-specific storytelling.* ❞

- **COPE framework (Create Once, Publish Everywhere):**

  ❝ *We are big believers in newsletters as the first touch point, which is then cut into video format and other text-based format guided by our COPE framework.* ❞

- **Editorial-style arcs:**

  ❝ *I treat each piece of content like a chapter in a larger human story, not a one-off announcement.* ❞

- **Trend hijacking:**

  ❝ *Tanzania's online scene moves quickly… we're ready to jump on trends, tying our client's message to what's hot on X or TikTok in real time.* ❞

## 7 STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS (TRADITIONAL PR VS DIGITAL STORYTELLING)

- **Control → Connection:**

  Traditional PR controls narratives; digital storytelling builds relationships.

- **Placement → Participation:**

  Traditional PR secures coverage; digital storytelling sparks community engagement.

- **Static → Dynamic:**

  Traditional PR is fixed; digital storytelling evolves continuously.

❝ *Traditional PR is about placement, while digital storytelling is about building relationships and communities through experiences that audiences actively shape and share.* ❞

## SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS

Digital storytelling is not just a new channel it's a philosophical shift. It reframes communications from announcing information to co-creating experiences, blending cultural authenticity, multimedia fluency, and data-driven agility

❝ *Traditional PR is about placement, while digital storytelling is about building relationships and communities through experiences that audiences actively shape and share.* ❞

❝ *For me, digital storytelling is not a transposition of traditional PR into new platforms. It's a shift in philosophy.* ❞

## Impact of Algorithm Changes & Platform Policies on Campaign Outcomes in the Past Year

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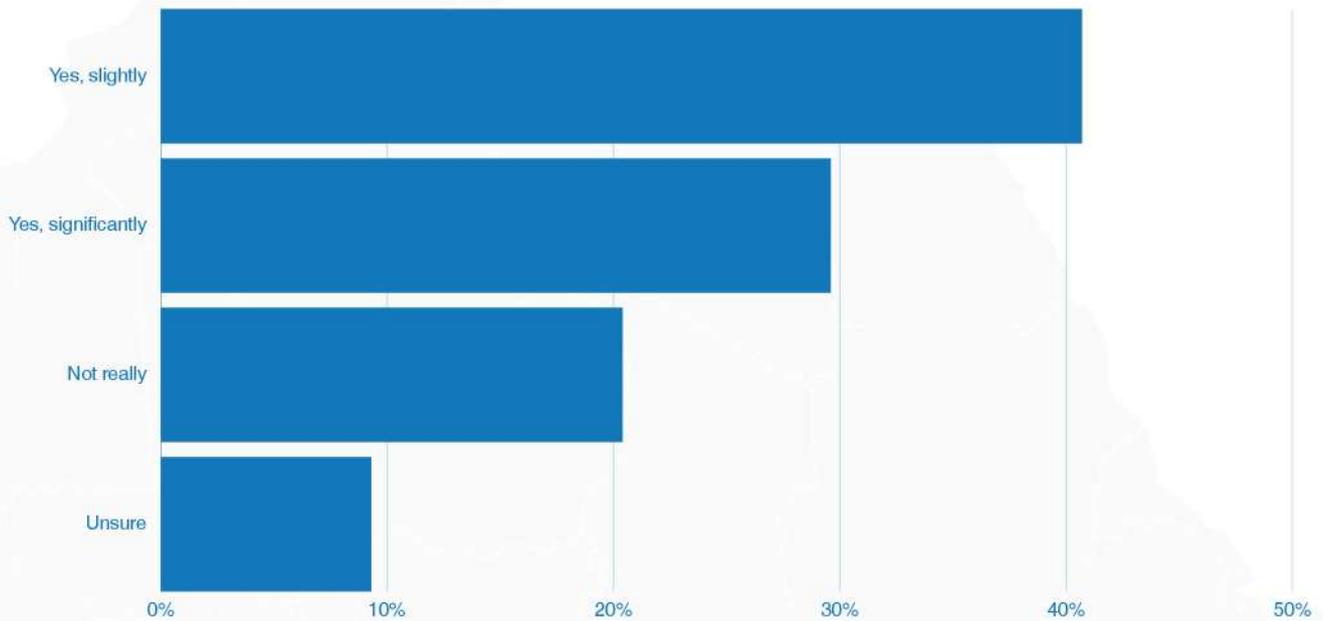


## Key Findings

- A substantial majority of PR professionals and agencies (70.4%) report that recent algorithm changes and platform policies from major tech companies (e.g., Meta, Google) have affected their campaign outcomes.

- Of these, 40.7% say the impact was slight, while a notable 29.6% describe it as significant indicating that for nearly one in three respondents, these changes have meaningfully disrupted reach, engagement, or performance.

- Only 20.4% feel the impact was negligible ("Not really"), and 9.3% remain unsure.

- Given that this sample is dominated by highly experienced practitioners (59.3% with >10 years) working primarily in agencies (57.4%), the results suggest that platform volatility remains a persistent challenge in digital-first PR strategies across Africa, with a clear majority experiencing at least some level of disruption.

## Key Themes for Measuring Trust & Authenticity in Digital Campaigns

| Rank | Theme / Measurement Approach | % of Respondents Mentioning | Representative Quotes |
|------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | Sentiment analysis (tone, positivity, sincerity) | 33.3% | "Sentiment analysis to measure the ratio of positive, neutral and negative mentions over time." "We look at the vibe in Swahili or English comments… Positive buzz means we're trusted." |
| 2 | Quality & depth of comments / engagement | 27.8% | "Comment depth, save rates, return engagement, community sentiment." "Thoughtful comments, personal resonance, or story-sharing responses." "Real trust shows up in comments and shares." |
| 3 | Surveys, NPS, direct feedback, polls | 24.1% | "Direct surveys, polls, and post-campaign brand lift studies (e.g. 'Do you find this brand trustworthy?')." "Customer reviews and positive online sentiment." |
| 4 | Organic amplification (shares, referrals, advocacy) | 20.4% | "Shares with meaningful captions, conversations that continue beyond a single post." "When people choose to spend time with your content, defend it, share it, or contribute their own stories." |
| 5 | Engagement quality over quantity (beyond vanity metrics) | 18.5% | "Engagement quality matters more than quantity." "We make sure to move past vanity metrics (likes, impressions) and speak to credibility and relationships." |
| 6 | Consistency of message, tone, values across channels | 18.5% | "Consistency across channels: does the brand's tone, value, and story remain believable no matter the channel?" "When the brand voice, values, and actions match across platforms, trust grows." |
| 7 | Influencer / advocate credibility & natural alignment | 18.5% | "Influencer Credibility to check engagement authenticity and brand-audience alignment." "If creators or partners speak naturally about the brand without overly polished scripts." |
| 8 | Repeat engagement, long-term loyalty, advocacy | 16.7% | "Repeat engagement, repeat conversions and long-term customer relationships." "Growth of owned channels (newsletter sign-ups, community membership)." |

## Key Findings

The table reveals that PR professionals and agencies prioritize "qualitative, human-centred indicators" over traditional vanity metrics when assessing trust and authenticity in digital campaigns. The top three themes dominate the responses:

1. Sentiment analysis (33.3% of respondents) is the most frequently mentioned method, with professionals using it to evaluate the tone, sincerity, and emotional resonance of online conversations (e.g., "positive, sincere tones rather than transactional ones").

2. Quality and depth of engagement(27.8%) ranks second, focusing on thoughtful, personal, and story-sharing comments rather than sheer volume (e.g., "comment depth, save rates, return engagement" and "real trust shows up in comments and shares").

3. Direct feedback mechanisms such as surveys, NPS, polls, and customer reviews (24.1%) provide explicit audience perception data, helping to confirm whether people feel seen and believe the brand's message.

These are closely followed by organic amplification and advocacy (20.4%), engagement quality over quantity (18.5%), consistency across channels (18.5%), and influencer/advocate credibility (18.5%), all of which emphasize natural, voluntary audience behaviours and alignment.

In essence, the data shows a clear industry consensus: trust and authenticity are best measured through genuine emotional connection, behavioural signals (shares, advocacy, repeat engagement), and qualitative depth not superficial numbers. Professionals seek evidence that audiences feel something real, relate personally, and act voluntarily a sophisticated, relationship-first approach to evaluating digital campaign success.

## Do You Believe AI Threatens Ethical Standards in PR (e.g. Misinformation, Authorship, Bias)

Do you believe AI threatens ethical standards
in PR (e.g., misinformation, authorship, bias)

● Yes   ● No   ● Not sure

Not sure
13%

No
16.7%

Yes
70.3%

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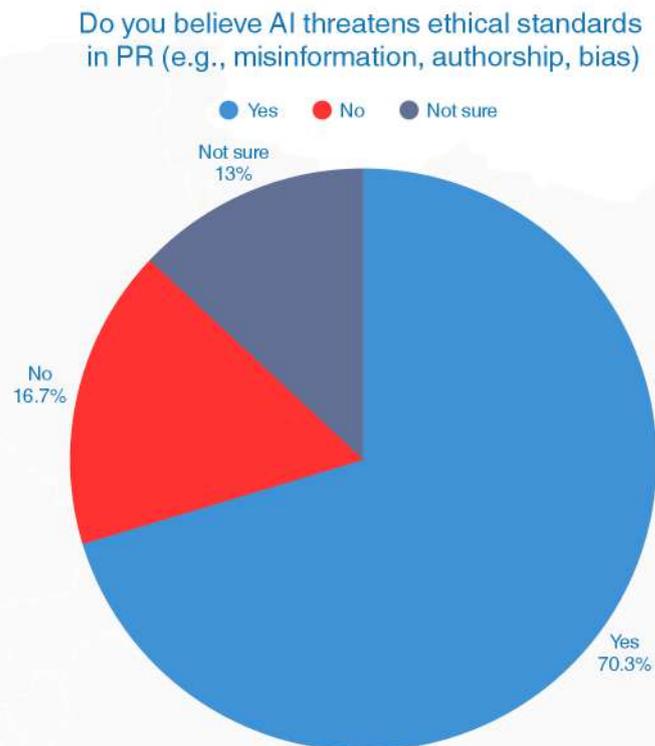
### Key Findings

- A clear majority of PR professionals and agency leaders (70.4%) believe that AI does threaten ethical standards in public relations, particularly with regard to misinformation, authorship, and bias.

- Only 16.7% reject this view outright ("No"), while 13.0% remain uncertain ("Not sure").

- This strong affirmative response from a highly experienced cohort (59.3% with >10 years in PR, mostly agency leaders) indicates widespread concern that the speed, scale, and opacity of AI-generated content introduce significant risks to credibility, transparency, and truthfulness in the profession even as most actively use AI tools in their daily work (Q6–Q7).

- The finding aligns with earlier concerns about misinformation/fabricated content (63.8%) and bias (51.3%) in Question 17, reinforcing that ethical implications remain a major point of tension despite high practical adoption.

## Ethical Considerations or Policies Your Organization Adopted When Using AI in Communications

| Rank | Theme / Ethical Consideration / Policy | % of Respondents Mentioning | Representative Quotes |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Human oversight & review (always human in the loop) | 48.1% | "Every AI-generated output is reviewed, fact-checked and aligned with our brand values before being used publicly." "AI-generated content is always reviewed by a team member before publication." "Human oversight — expert human eyes MUST still review AI-generated output for tone and brand consistency." |
| 2 | Transparency & disclosure (informing clients/audience about AI use) | 42.6% | "Transparency: disclose when AI is used in content creation." "We're open about using AI for drafting or data analysis on X or Instagram. Clients know." "We make sure to mention when content is AI enhanced or powered." |
| 3 | Accuracy & fact-checking (preventing misinformation/hallucinations) | 38.9% | "Accuracy: fact-check AI outputs before sending out." "We ensure all AI-assisted work is reviewed and refined by humans to keep it authentic." "Any AI-generated insight, draft or data point must be reviewed and validated by a human expert." |
| 4 | Data privacy & confidentiality (protecting client/sensitive info) | 35.2% | "Data privacy: never feed sensitive or client-protected info into open AI systems." "We follow TCRA rules, keeping user and client data safe." "We prioritize data privacy and strictly avoid using AI tools that compromise confidential client information." |
| 5 | Avoiding bias & ensuring cultural sensitivity/fairness | 24.1% | "Bias-checking: test prompts/outputs against diverse perspectives." "We check AI outputs to avoid stereotypes that don't fit Tanzania's diversity." "We verify all generative AI against traditional and cultural nuances for each demographic." |
| 6 | AI as support tool only (never replacement for human judgment/creativity) | 22.2% | "AI is used as a support tool, never a replacement for human creativity and judgment." "AI should never be the final 'eye' on a campaign." "AI is an assistant, not the professional." |
| 7 | Training & internal guidelines (team education & policies) | 16.7% | "We have everyone trained on integrity measures around AI." "We have organized trainings on the ethical issues surrounding the use of AI." "We have guidelines and regular training." |
| 8 | No formal policy yet / emerging adoption | 11.1% | "Yet to fully embrace it." "We've currently not fully adopted any framework or policy to guide us on AI, but hope to adopt one in future." "None at the moment." |

## Key Findings

The open-ended responses reveal a highly responsible and proactive approach to AI ethics among PR professionals and agencies. The vast majority have adopted clear guardrails, with human oversight and review (48.1%) emerging as the single most important principle — ensuring AI never becomes the final decision-maker.

Transparency and disclosure (42.6%) follows closely, with many organizations explicitly informing clients and audiences when AI is used. Accuracy/fact-checking (38.9%) and data privacy/confidentiality (35.2%) are also widespread priorities, reflecting acute awareness of misinformation and trust risks.

A significant portion (24.1%) emphasize bias mitigation and cultural sensitivity, particularly in diverse African contexts, while others stress that AI must remain a support tool (22.2%) and that teams receive regular training (16.7%).

Although a small minority (11.1%) report no formal policy yet, the overall picture is one of mature, values-driven adoption — balancing innovation with accountability, integrity, and the preservation of human creativity and authenticity in communications.

## Most Critical Skills for the Next Generation of PR Professionals

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● Most Critical Skills for the Next Generation of PR Professionals
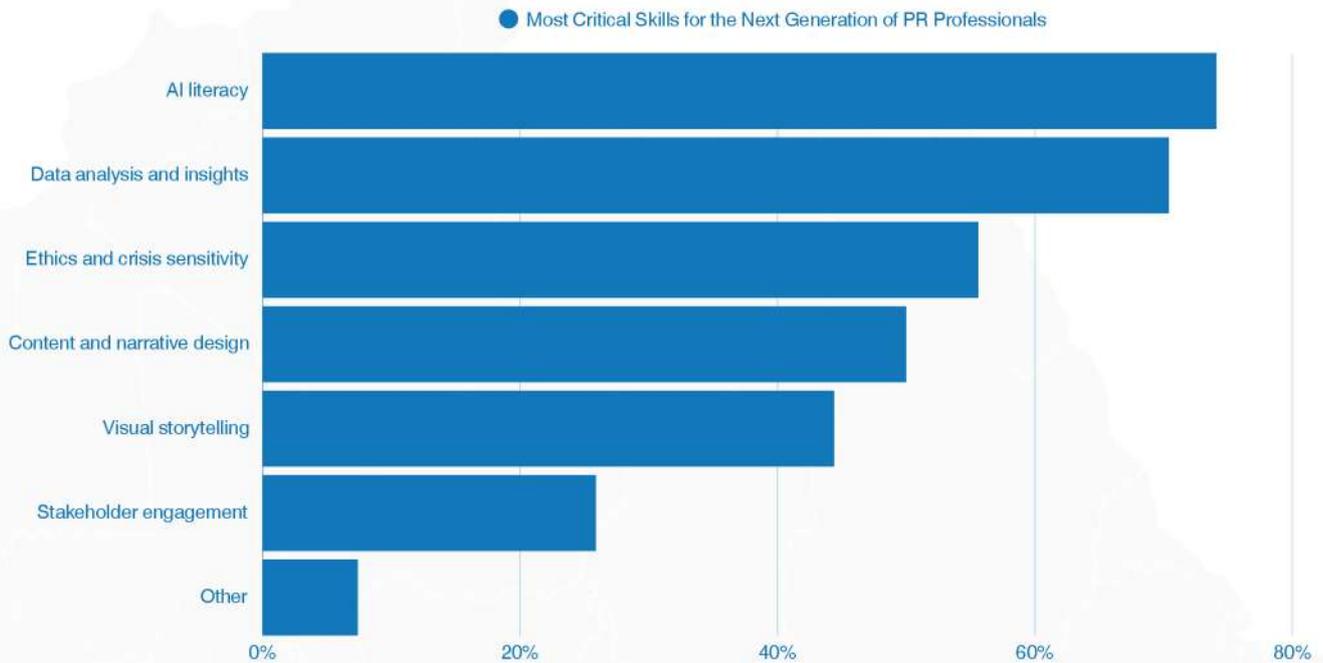


## Key Findings

- Respondents overwhelmingly identify AI literacy as the single most essential future skill, selected by 74.1% a clear signal that proficiency in using, understanding, and ethically managing AI tools is now considered foundational for the next generation of PR practitioners.
- Data analysis and insights follows very closely (70.4%), underscoring the growing demand for data-driven decision-making, performance measurement, and audience intelligence in modern PR.
- Ethics and crisis sensitivity ranks third (55.6%), reflecting deep awareness of the ethical risks (misinformation, bias, transparency) that accompany AI and digital acceleration.
- Content and narrative design (50.0%) and visual storytelling (44.4%) remain highly valued, showing that creative storytelling and visual communication skills are still core though now expected to coexist with technical and ethical competencies.
- Stakeholder engagement (25.9%) appears less frequently, suggesting it is viewed as a timeless baseline rather than a new/emerging priority.
- A few respondents added niche skills such as adaptability, advanced LLM expertise, innovation advisory, and competitive intelligence.

Overall, the results paint a future where technical fluency (AI + data) combines with ethical responsibility and strong creative storytelling a hybrid skillset that balances innovation, integrity, and human connection.

## Organizational Preparedness for AI & Automation Integration in Daily PR Operations

### Organizational Preparedness for AI & Automation Integration in Daily PR Operations

● Organizational Preparedness for AI & Automation Integration in Daily PR Operations
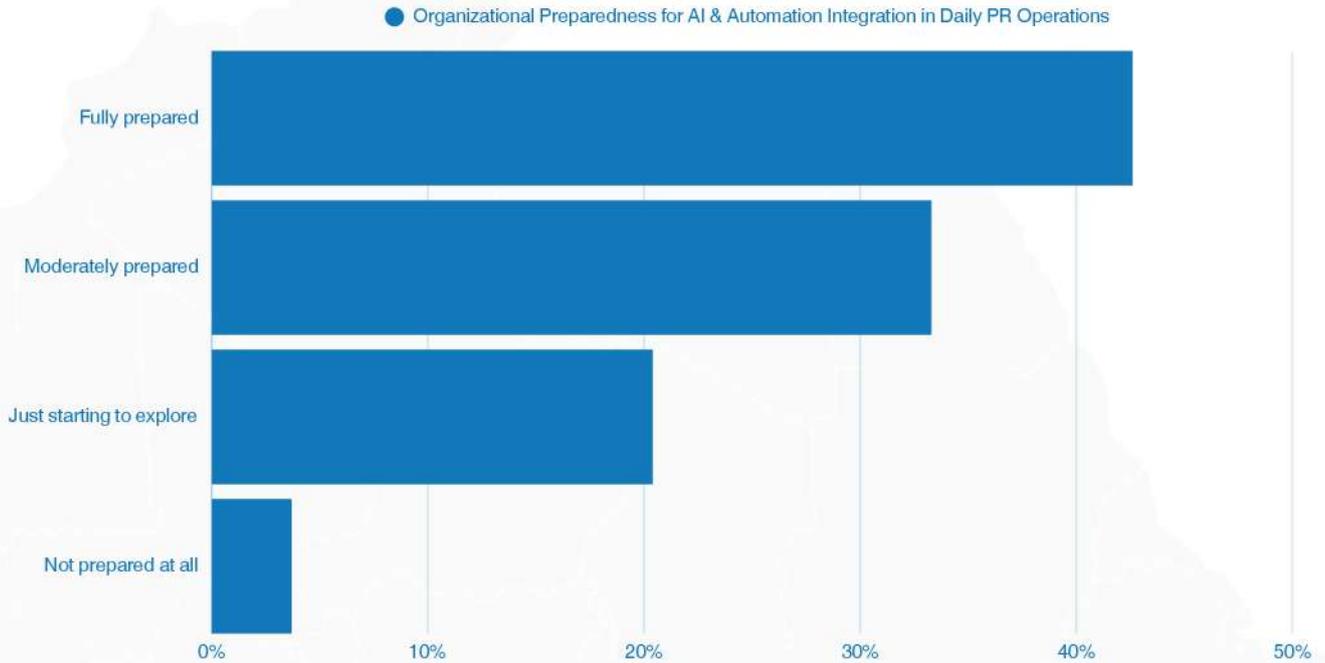


## Key Findings

- A strong majority of PR agencies and professionals report that their organizations are at least moderately prepared for integrating AI and automation into daily operations, with 75.9% falling into the "Fully prepared" (42.6%) or "Moderately prepared" (33.3%) categories.

- This high level of readiness is notable given the seniority of the sample (59.3% with >10 years of experience) and aligns with the near-universal active use of AI tools (90.7% for writing assistants, 81.5% for design tools) seen in earlier questions.

- Only 20.4% are just starting to explore, and a tiny 3.7% (2 respondents) admit to being not prepared at all.

- The results suggest that most organizations especially agencies have moved beyond awareness into active planning, adoption, and integration, reflecting a mature and forward-looking approach to AI in the African PR landscape.

## How will AI most likely reshape the African PR industry in the next 3–5 years

| Rank | Theme / Predicted Impact on African PR Industry | % of Respondents Mentioning | Representative Quotes |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Efficiency & automation of routine tasks (research, monitoring, drafting, reporting) | 57.4% | "AI will streamline research, monitoring, and analytics, freeing PR teams to focus more on strategy and creativity." "Automating routine tasks like press release drafting, report generation, and media monitoring." "AI will accelerate content production, media monitoring, and analytics." |
| 2 | Data-driven insights & real-time intelligence (sentiment, trends, personalization) | 48.1% | "Real-time insights on media trends, public sentiment (possibly including in local languages)." "AI will help us analyze public sentiment in real time… and predict trends before they happen." "Deeper insights into audience sentiment, predictive reputation management." |
| 3 | Hyper-localization, cultural adaptation & multilingual capabilities | 40.7% | "Hyper-localized storytelling possible at scale, adapting content to diverse audiences and languages." "AI will help craft stories that hit home with local audiences, like using Swahili slang or cultural references." "Localise campaigns across Africa's many languages and cultures." |
| 4 | Enhanced creativity & strategic focus (freeing humans for high-value work) | 35.2% | "Freeing professionals to focus on relationships, strategy and creativity." "Shift from being execution-heavy to being more strategic, insight-driven and creative." "Amplify creativity, insight, and reach." |
| 5 | Need for greater ethical responsibility, transparency & human oversight | 31.5% | "Push the industry to redefine trust, as authentic human oversight becomes the differentiator." "Greater ethical responsibility, transparency, and local cultural adaptation." "The real shift will be in ethics and context." |
| 6 | Risk of losing authenticity, creativity or cultural nuance | 22.2% | "Threatens to undermine human-first storytelling and iron out human-led creativity." "Risk of losing the authenticity of African stories due to limited representation of African contexts." "AI is mostly Euro centric… we need to build more content for Africa and its pluralism." |
| 7 | Democratization & leveling the playing field (affordable tools for smaller agencies/NGOs) | 16.7% | "AI will make data analytics cheaper, helping smaller African agencies compete." "Democratize access… leveling the playing field." |
| 8 | Rise of new challenges (deepfakes, misinformation, uniformity) | 11.1% | "Deep Fakes are about to get to a whole new level. Engagement farming as well." "All PR/comms strategies will end up looking the same." |

## Key Findings

In the view of most respondents, AI will fundamentally accelerate and professionalize the African PR industry over the next 3–5 years, primarily by automating routine tasks (57.4%) and delivering real-time, data-driven insights (48.1%). This shift will free practitioners to focus on higher-value strategy, creativity, and relationship-building. A strong emphasis also emerges on hyper-localization and cultural adaptation (40.7%), with many predicting AI will enable more personalized, multilingual, and contextually relevant storytelling across the continent's diverse markets.

At the same time, nearly a third (31.5%) stress the urgent need for stronger ethical safeguards, transparency, and human oversight to preserve trust and authenticity. While some see risks such as loss of genuine creativity or cultural nuance (22.2%) and new threats like deepfakes the dominant outlook is optimistic: AI will democratize access (16.7%), amplify impact, and elevate the profession, provided African practitioners blend technological fluency with local cultural intelligence and ethical responsibility.

This forward-looking consensus reflects a mature industry mindset: excited about efficiency and scale, but deeply committed to protecting what makes African PR unique its human heart, cultural depth, and storytelling authenticity

## How Will AI Most Likely Reshape The African PR Industry in the Next 3–5 Years

| Category | Theme / Key Point | % of Respondents Mentioning | Supporting Quotes from Respondents |
|---|---|---|---|
| Opportunities | Efficiency, automation & cost reduction (faster tasks, lower barriers) | 61.1% | "AI tools cut costs for analytics and content creation, letting small agencies like ours in Dar es Salaam compete with global players." "Automating press releases, media monitoring, and reporting saves time and resources." "AI will streamline research, monitoring, and analytics, freeing PR teams to focus more on strategy and creativity." |
| Opportunities | Data-driven insights & real-time intelligence | 50.0% | "Deeper Insights & Local Relevance: AI-driven social listening tools can analyze millions of conversations, even in multiple African languages." "Real-time insights on media trends, public sentiment (possibly including in local languages)." "AI will help us analyze public sentiment in real time… and predict trends before they happen." |
| Opportunities | Personalization, hyper-localization & cultural relevance | 44.4% | "Hyper-localized storytelling possible at scale, adapting content to diverse audiences and languages." "AI can help craft stories that hit home with local audiences, like using Swahili slang or cultural references for Tanzanians." "Personalized, culturally relevant communication at scale." |
| Opportunities | Democratization & inclusivity (leveling the playing field for smaller players) | 31.5% | "Democratization of Storytelling: Smaller agencies and NGOs can access affordable AI tools, narrowing the gap with global players." "AI will make data analytics cheaper, helping smaller African agencies compete." "Level the global playing field, enabling African PR firms to engage with international clients." |
| Opportunities | Enhanced creativity, strategic focus & global reach | 25.9% | "Freeing professionals to focus on relationships, strategy and creativity." "Amplify creativity, insight, and reach." "Increased global reach and opportunities." |
| Risks | Loss of authenticity, human touch & creativity | 57.4% | "Erosion of Trust and Authenticity." "Loss of human nuance in messaging." "If brands lean too hard on automation, they risk cultural missteps, bias, and tone-deaf messaging." |
| Risks | Misinformation, deepfakes & manipulation | 46.3% | "The spread of misinformation amplified by automated systems." "Deep Fakes are about to get to a whole new level." "Misinformation or errors in AI-generated content can damage credibility." |
| Risks | Bias & cultural disconnect (Western-centric models) | 35.2% | "Generic AI models often misinterpret African contexts." "AI is mostly Euro centric… we need to build more content for Africa and its pluralism." "Cultural distortion: generic AI models often misinterpret African contexts." |
| Risks | Data privacy, security & ethical/regulatory gaps | 31.5% | "Data privacy and security are also critical." "Weak regulatory environments can expose organizations to risks of data misuse." "Data Privacy & Surveillance Concerns." |
| Risks | Digital divide & unequal access | 22.2% | "Digital inequality could mean that AI-driven campaigns only reach certain audiences, leaving others behind." "Widening the digital divide if technology is not accessible to all." |

### Summary

Respondents see tremendous upside in efficiency, personalization, and inclusivity with AI enabling faster, cheaper, more targeted, and culturally resonant PR at scale. At the same time, they are highly attuned to serious risks, especially the potential loss of authenticity, rise of misinformation, cultural bias, and data privacy challenges. The prevailing view is that success depends on balance: leveraging AI to amplify African voices while fiercely protecting human creativity, cultural integrity, and ethical standards.

# THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

**AI and Digital-First Media:**
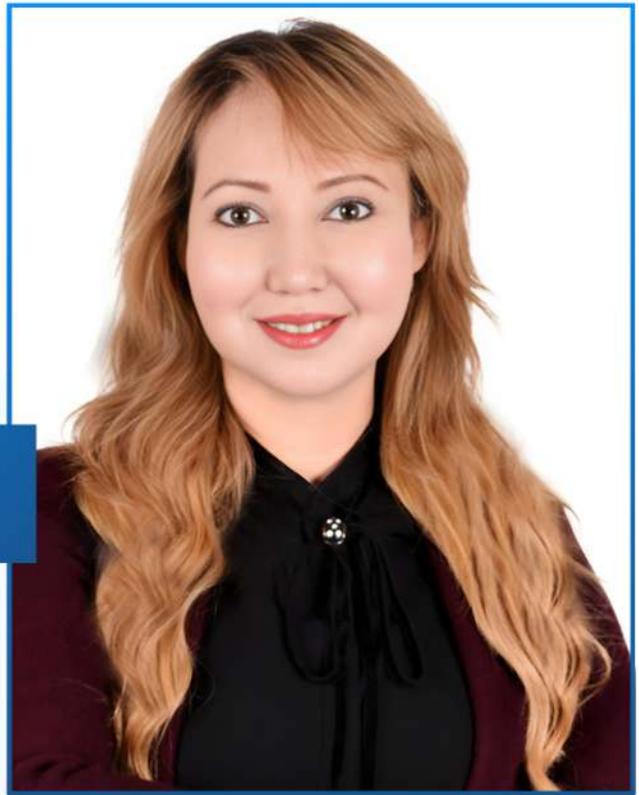
Reshaping Africa's PR Landscape

THOUGHT LEADER

FATMA HALIM



GLASSHOUSEPR

13 YEARS OF TELLING YOUR STORY

# Q&A

## FATMA HALIM →

**Publicist inc.**

**SENIOR COMMUNICATIONS CONSULTANT
PUBLICIST INC.
CAIRO, EGYPT**

15 years bridging corporate communications, media relations, and digital transformation

**Q** **Tell us your name, role, and a bit about your journey in PR.**

I've spent the past 15 years navigating the intersections of corporate communications, media relations, and digital transformation. My journey in PR has been defined by one constant: change. I started in a time when traditional press coverage was the ultimate win. Today, credibility, speed, and engagement are earned through a fusion of storytelling, data, and technology. What keeps me grounded is my belief that while tools evolve, the core of PR, which is authentic connection and trust, remains timeless.

**Q** **From your vantage point, what are the most significant shifts you've seen in the PR and media landscape in Africa over the past five years?**

The past five years have completely redefined how African audiences engage with media. Traditional gatekeepers have given way to digital-first ecosystems where creators, platforms, and consumers share equal influence. The shift isn't just technological, but rather cultural. The rise of social storytelling, influencer advocacy, and AI-assisted targeting has decentralized communication power. What once flowed top-down is now a conversation among equals.

**Q** **Can you point to a moment or campaign that crystallizes this?**

One standout moment was the surge of purpose-driven digital campaigns during COVID-19. Brands that humanized their tone and communicated empathy, especially on platforms like Instagram and TikTok, earned long-term trust. Locally, I was inspired by campaigns that spotlighted small businesses through user-generated storytelling; they reflected a real, resilient, creative, and community-driven.

### Africa's Media Power Shift

*From gatekeepers to equal voices | COVID campaigns that built lasting trust | The rise of community-driven storytelling*

### AI as Strategic Co-Pilot

*Social listening & predictive analytics now table stakes | Freeing humans for creativity | The real-world cost of AI "hallucinations"*

# FATMA HALIM →   Q&A

**Q** **Any tools or use cases that have been genuine game-changers?**

Platforms that combine natural language processing and predictive analytics have been game-changers. They allow us to anticipate public sentiment, tailor messages to cultural nuances, and identify potential reputational risks before they escalate

**Q** **Have you seen AI either dramatically enhance or complicate a real campaign?**

AI enhanced one industry report I worked on by uncovering emerging trend shifts we might have missed manually; it reshaped our narrative in real time. On the flip side, we've seen the risks when AI-generated visuals or copy stray from cultural context (what the AI experts like to call hallucinations). It reinforced the importance of human oversight. AI can amplify brilliance, refine the language, and add new angles, but without human direction, it can easily provide misleading recommendations.

**Q** **Who is redefining influence right now?**

There are many examples, and I don't want to single one out. Creators who blend cultural insight with authenticity are the most relatable and credible. In Egypt, social context and humor have a high impact. Brands team up with various influencers and creators based on their target audiences with tailor-made, consumer-centric stories. They're not just influencers; they're modern-day community builders and opinion leaders. Their power lies in emotional truth, not production polish.

**Q** **How is AI currently being used in your sector to shape PR strategy, media engagement, or audience analysis?**

AI is now integral to how we plan, monitor, and measure campaigns. From social listening and trend forecasting to sentiment analysis, it's helping us understand audiences with more depth and precision. We also use AI-driven tools for content ideation and research summaries, saving time on routine work so teams can focus on creativity, strategy, and actual client support on the ground.

## Digital-First Platforms & New Influencers

*TikTok's visual pulse | Podcasts as unfiltered thought leadership | Creators as community builders, not just endorsers*

**Q** **How have digital-first platforms like TikTok, podcasts, and WhatsApp newsletters changed how African audiences engage with brands?**

These platforms have made engagement more personal, spontaneous, and community-based. TikTok, for instance, gave African storytelling a visual pulse with short, relatable, and culture-rich content. Podcasts have become spaces for unfiltered thought leadership. And WhatsApp newsletters bridge the gap between intimacy and mass communication. Together, they've dismantled the notion that influence only exists on traditional channels

**Q** **How are youth-led digital movements shaping mainstream narratives?**

Youth-led movements have redefined what relevance means. From anti-harassment to climate and gender equality campaigns, they've forced brands and media institutions to listen, not lecture. These movements represent the new PR reality: audiences no longer just consume stories; they co-author them.

## Ethics, Authenticity & African Representation

*Speed vs. truth | Mandatory human review protocols | Training AI on local data to prevent narrative flattening*

**Q** **What are the biggest ethical challenges in an AI-driven media environment?**

The main challenge is speed. AI can generate content faster than we can verify it. That pressure to "be first" can compromise truth. There's also a growing tension between personalization algorithms and editorial integrity when the line between relevance and manipulation blurs. Maintaining authenticity requires slowing down just enough to apply human ethics, even in a real-time world.

# FATMA HALIM → Q&A

**Q** **Any safeguards that have made a measurable difference?**

A breakthrough came when we implemented a "human review protocol", an internal policy we have in the agency, for all AI-assisted content. It reaffirmed our belief that technology can empower integrity if guided by human values. The result was more reliable content and more satisfied clients.

*The Class of 2030*

*Digital fluency + cultural intelligence + ethical adaptability | AI handles operations, humans handle meaning | An unapologetically African industry*

**Q** **How can African communicators ensure local stories are told responsibly on global platforms?**

Representation starts with ownership. We need to tell our own stories in our own voices, and use AI as an amplifier, not a filter. African professionals must train AI tools with localized data and context so our narratives aren't flattened by global algorithms. I've seen success when campaigns foreground local creators and cultural nuance instead of defaulting to Westernized templates.

**Q** **What skills and mindsets will define the next generation?**

Three things: digital fluency, cultural intelligence, and ethical adaptability. The future communicators must understand data and AI, yet still lead with empathy. The human touch, which is our ability to connect across cultures, read between the lines, and uphold integrity, will be the ultimate differentiator.

**Q** **Are there programs, mentors, or models you'd recommend?**

I always encourage young colleagues to seek mentors who've navigated both legacy media and digital transformation. Continuous learning through short, practical courses on data analytics, AI ethics, and storytelling is essential

**Q** **Paint us a picture of African PR and media in 2030.**

By 2030, I see an industry that's hyperconnected, tech-enabled, and unapologetically African in voice. AI will handle insights and operations, while people handle meaning and relationships. Brands will be built around purpose, powered by technology, and judged by trust. The communicators leading that world will be those who balance innovation with humanity.

THOUGHT LEADER



DR. CAROLINE KIARIE

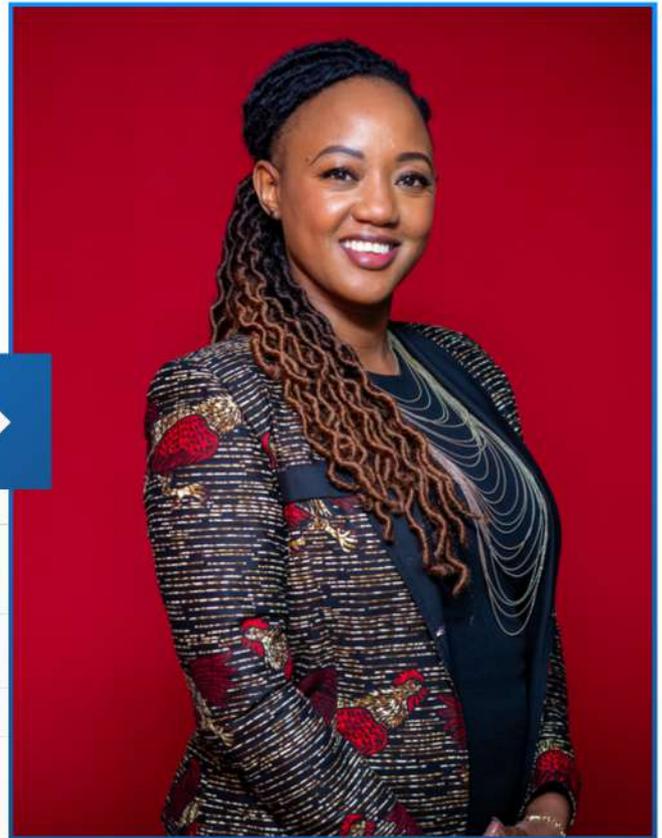GLASSHOUSEPR | 13 YEARS OF TELLING YOUR STORY

# Q&A

## DR. CAROLINE KIARIE →

**ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF COMMUNICATION**

**GRADUATE SCHOOL OF MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS,**

**AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY**

THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

**Q** **Tell us your name, role, and a bit about your journey in PR.**

My name is Dr. Caroline Kiarie, and I am an Assistant Professor of Communication with more than two decades of experience spanning academia and industry. My journey in public relations began with a deep curiosity about how communication shapes relationships, influences behavior, and supports organizational purpose from a financial industry perspective. Over the years, this curiosity evolved into a career dedicated to understanding and teaching the strategic role of communication in organizations.

I have had the privilege of training and working with organizations across Kenya, South Africa, and the United States experiences that have enriched my perspective on how PR practice adapts to cultural, technological, and organizational contexts. My work focuses on corporate communication, interpersonal communication, public relations, and digital and social media strategy. I am particularly passionate about capacity-building in strategic communication.

My research reflects the dynamic shifts in our field. I study areas such as employee motivation, colorism, X (formerly Twitter) conversations, generational studies, climate change, online collaborative learning, and the emerging role of artificial intelligence in public relations practice. I have published peer-reviewed work in these domains and continue to explore how technology is reshaping the profession.

Currently, I lecture at the Graduate School of Media and Communications at the Aga Khan University. Prior to this, I served as an Assistant Professor in Strategic Communication at United States International University–Africa and have taught across several universities, covering a wide range of communication topics. I hold a PhD in Communication, Media, and Cultural Studies from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, an MSc in Communications and Marketing from Franklin University, and a BA from the University of Nairobi. I am also an active member of several professional bodies, including PRSK, MSK, EACA, SACOMM, and IAMCR.

My journey in PR has been defined by a commitment to advancing strategic communication practice, nurturing talent, and contributing to scholarly and professional conversations that strengthen the discipline across Kenya, the continent, and beyond.

## DR. CAROLINE KIARIE → Q&A

**Q**

### What have been the most profound shifts in Africa's PR and media landscape over the past five years?

Over the past five years, the PR and media landscape in Africa has undergone profound transformation driven by technology, audience behavior, and the evolving expectations placed on communication professionals. Three shifts stand out most clearly from my vantage point: the integration of AI into communication workflows, the convergence of once-distinct communication roles, and the steady repositioning of PR from a tactical function to a fully strategic communication practice.

First, AI has moved from a peripheral tool to a core enabler of PR work. From social listening and sentiment analysis to content generation, predictive analytics, and stakeholder mapping, AI is reshaping how communicators plan, execute, and measure their strategies. While AI does not replace the communicator's judgment and the human connection, it has elevated the profession's capacity for insight-driven decision-making. A powerful example is the rise of AI-driven crisis monitoring across sectors in Kenya, where organizations now detect reputational risks in real time long before they escalate on digital platforms.

Second, we are witnessing a clear convergence of roles across PR, marketing, digital media, and corporate communication. Audiences no longer distinguish between these functions, and organizations are responding by integrating communication units to deliver cohesive stakeholder engagement. Today's practitioner is expected to be a strategist, storyteller, analyst, and digital creator all at once. This has expanded the scope of PR practice and elevated the demand for multidisciplinary competence.

Third, and perhaps most significantly, PR in Africa is transitioning toward a strategic communication orientation. Organizations increasingly recognise that communication is not merely supportive but central to mission achievement, reputation building, and stakeholder trust. This paradigm shift is part of what informed the introduction of the MA in Strategic Communications at the Aga Khan University, a programme intentionally designed to equip practitioners with strategic thinking, analytical skills, ethical grounding, and leadership capabilities aligned with global best practice.

Taken together, these shifts signal a maturing profession; one that is becoming more strategic, more technologically empowered, and more central to organizational decision-making across Africa.

### AI in the Classroom and the Newsroom

*Brandwatch, Meltwater & Talkwalker for real-time crisis detection | Canva AI turning student research into boardroom-ready visuals | Strict policy: AI supports, never substitutes*

**Q**

### How is AI actually being used in your environment and across the sector?

AI is increasingly shaping how we teach and practise strategic communication within the university environment. In the MA in Strategic Communications programme, AI is integrated both as a teaching tool and as a professional capability that students must master. We have courses that focus on the use AI for audience analysis, social listening, trend monitoring, and content development, enabling students to work with the same technologies driving the evolution of PR practice.

AI-powered platforms such as Brandwatch, Meltwater, and Talkwalker are particularly impactful in teaching real-time sentiment analysis and issue tracking. They help students understand how data informs strategy, stakeholder mapping, and crisis preparedness.

## DR. CAROLINE KIARIE → Q&A

We also use generative AI tools such as Chatgpt, Gemini, and Deepseek in a guided, ethical manner to support research, message testing, and campaign planning, ensuring students learn how to evaluate AI outputs critically rather than rely on them passively.

In this academic setting, AI is not just a tool but an essential component of professional readiness. It equips emerging practitioners with the analytical skills, technological fluency, and strategic mindset required to lead in a rapidly changing PR and media landscape.

**Q**      **A concrete moment where AI made a tangible difference?**

Yes, AI has meaningfully enhanced PR and media work, and one of the clearest examples comes from how our students use AI-powered design tools to elevate their strategic communication presentations. Platforms like Canva, which now integrate AI-driven layout suggestions, data visualisation, and content enhancement features, have significantly improved the quality of student work.

A strong example is when students develop their final strategic communication plans. Some use Canva's AI-assisted templates and data visualisation tools to turn complex research findings into clear, compelling infographics and presentation slides. The tool helps them communicate insights more effectively, structure ideas more coherently, and present professional-grade campaign visuals that mirror industry expectations and increase engagement.
This enhancement demonstrates how AI can support creativity and clarity without replacing the student's own analysis. It reinforces the value of teaching ethical AI use and critical thinking, ensuring that technology amplifies strategic ideas rather than substitutes them.

We also guide students on how to use AI as a support tool and have a policy in place. We want to ensure our students remain the primary thinkers, analysts, and strategists behind their work. While AI can significantly elevate strategic communication, it must be used responsibly to preserve the integrity and analytic depth that the profession requires.

### Digital-Native Audiences & Youth Power

*Podcast studios as classrooms | Award-winning productions like Kabrazen | Kenya's 2024 Finance Bill protests: TikTok & X set the national agenda*

**Q**      **How have TikTok, podcasts, and WhatsApp changed audience expectations?**

The digital first platforms have created a more participatory, community-driven communication environment where audiences expect immediacy, authenticity, and relevance. These platforms allow people to co-create narratives, challenge institutions, and organically elevate content that resonates with their lived experiences.

At Aga Khan University's Graduate School of Media and Communications, we have seen this shift firsthand. Our fully equipped podcast studio has become a valuable teaching and production space where media and communications students learn how audio storytelling shapes public engagement. We have masterclasses and we also partner with external organisations to produce high-quality podcast content, and some of these collaborations have achieved notable success, including award-winning productions such as Kabrazen.

## DR. CAROLINE KIARIE → Q&A

Across the continent, creators and campaigns on TikTok and podcasting platforms are redefining communication norms by blending humour, cultural commentary, and social issues with brand storytelling. These digital-first spaces are not just channels but influential ecosystems, and they are pushing communicators to become more strategic, agile, and audience-centred in how they craft messages.

### Q | Which youth-led movement showed the new power balance?

Youth-led digital movements are increasingly shaping mainstream PR and media narratives in Africa. A striking example was the Finance Bill 2024 protests in Kenya, where campaigns on X and TikTok amplified youth voices and quickly influenced public discourse. These platforms forced the government, institutions, and media to respond in real time, demonstrating the power of digital-native audiences to set the agenda.

This shift highlights the need for communicators to engage strategically, listen actively, and craft messages that are authentic and responsive to fast-moving online conversations

### Ethics & Authentic African Voices

*AI's data gap on African contexts breeds bias | Mandatory validation of every AI output | Local stories succeeding globally when we own the microphone*

### Q | What are the biggest ethical risks right now?

AI can amplify messages rapidly, but it can also inadvertently produce content that is misleading, biased, or disconnected from context if used uncritically. Algorithms tend to prioritise engagement over accuracy, which can incentivise sensationalism and undermine trust. Also remember from an African context, AI doesn't have enough of our content to make reference to, so accuracy becomes a challenge.

A breakthrough in this area has been in our teaching and practice at Aga Khan University, we encourage students to use AI as a support tool rather than a substitute for judgment. For instance, when students use AI for social listening or content generation, they are trained to validate insights, contextualize data, and ensure that the final storytelling aligns with ethical standards and organizational values. This approach demonstrates that authenticity is achievable even in a highly automated media landscape, but only when human oversight and ethical reflection remain central.

### Q | How can African stories break through globally without being filtered?

African PR and media professionals can ensure local stories are represented responsibly and powerfully on global digital platforms by combining cultural insight, strategic storytelling, and digital fluency. This means understanding the nuances of local context, crafting narratives that resonate both locally and globally, and using data-driven approaches to target the right audiences without losing authenticity.

A successful example is the international reach of campaigns like #Kabrazen, produced in partnership with Aga Khan University. By leveraging podcasts and social media platforms, these stories reached young global audiences while preserving local voices, experiences, and perspectives. Such initiatives show that when African communicators take ownership of their narratives and use digital tools thoughtfully, they can amplify local stories on a global stage without compromising authenticity or impact.

# DR. CAROLINE KIARIE  →  Q&A

## The Class of 2030

*Strategic thinking + ethical AI fluency + creative agility | Seamless collaboration across PR, marketing & tech | Africa shaping, not just consuming, global narratives*

**Q**  ### What will separate the winners in 2030?

The next generation of PR and media professionals in Africa will need strategic thinking, digital fluency, ethical judgment, and creative agility. They must be able to integrate data and AI insights with human-centered storytelling, navigate converging roles across PR, marketing, and digital media, and respond quickly to fast-moving online conversations while maintaining authenticity.

**Q**  ### Are there programs or mentors you'd recommend?

Programs like the MA in Strategic Communications at Aga Khan University equip students with these skills, combining theory, practical application, and exposure to real-world campaigns. Offering mentorship and apprenticeship from experienced professionals and models such as the Barcelona Principles for measurement and ethical communication frameworks also provide valuable guidance for developing both competence and integrity in the profession. It's also important that industry leaders formulate and customize models that can work for their industry

**Q**  ### Your vision for African PR and media in 2030?

By 2030, I envision Africa's PR and media industry as highly strategic, technologically empowered, and globally influential, yet deeply rooted in local context. AI and advanced analytics will routinely inform strategy, allowing communicators to anticipate trends, personalise messaging, and engage audiences in real time. Digital platforms will continue to evolve, creating immersive storytelling opportunities through podcasts, AR/VR experiences, and interactive social content.

At the same time, African voices will drive global narratives, with local stories reaching international audiences without losing authenticity. Collaboration across PR, marketing, media, and tech will be seamless, and ethical, human-centered communication will be a defining hallmark. In essence, the industry will be dynamic, inclusive, and strategic positioned to shape both public discourse and socio-economic development across the continent

**THOUGHT LEADER**

**DR YETTY OGUNNUBI**

**GLASSHOUSEPR** | **13 YEARS** OF TELLING YOUR STORY

# Q&A

## DR YETTY OGUNNUBI →

**FOUNDER & CEO, YD COMPANY (FORMERLY YD AGENCY), LAGOS, NIGERIA**

**Q**  **Tell us your name, role, and a bit about your journey in PR.**

I'm Dr Yetty Ogunnubi, the founder and CEO of YD Company, a dynamic PR and media agency dedicated to empowering brands through innovative communication strategies. My journey in public relations began as a producer for Uber Africa Unmasked in the UK, where I first dipped my toes into the world of PR. During this time, I quickly realised the importance of effective communication when I had to take on additional responsibilities to oversee the PR efforts, as the agency we had partnered with was not meeting our expectations. This experience ignited my passion for the industry and laid the groundwork for my
 future endeavours.

After moving back to Nigeria, I took on the role of Communications and Marketing Director for Africa Fashion Week London and Nigeria over a decade ago. This position allowed me to hone my skills in strategic communication, brand positioning, and audience engagement within the vibrant fashion industry. I worked diligently to elevate the profiles of African designers and promote cultural narratives, gaining invaluable insights into the intricacies of PR and marketing in a diverse landscape.

As my reputation in the industry grew, I began to attract attention from various brands and organizations seeking my expertise. This influx of interest ultimately led me to establish YD Agency in 2016, driven by a vision to create a space where storytelling and strategic communication could flourish. My agency quickly became known for its innovative approaches and commitment to helping brands navigate the complexities of modern media.

In 2020, amidst the global challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, we rebranded to YD Limited (YD Company) to reflect our evolution and expanded capabilities. During this time, we adapted to the changing landscape, leveraging digital platforms and innovative solutions to help our clients connect with their audiences in new ways. Our focus on storytelling remained at the forefront of our strategies, as we sought to empower brands to authentically communicate their messages and build lasting connections. Today, at YD Company, we continue to redefine public relations for the digital age, blending traditional and digital media to craft compelling narratives that resonate with audiences. My journey in PR has been marked by a commitment to
 innovation, authenticity, and the belief that powerful stories can transform brands and foster meaningful relationships

# DR YETTY OGUNNUBI → Q&A

## The Democratisation of Voice

*Digital platforms hand the microphone to the people | #EndSARS as the continent's loudest wake-up call | From gatekept narratives to grassroots agenda-setting*

**Q   How is your agency actually using AI today?**

At YD Company, we utilise AI to analyse audience sentiment and tailor our PR strategies accordingly. Tools like sentiment analysis algorithms and predictive analytics platforms have been instrumental in understanding audience behaviours and preferences. For example, we recently used AI-driven insights to refine a campaign for a tech client, resulting in a 30% increase in engagement.

**Q   What have been the biggest shifts in Africa's PR and media landscape over the past five years?**

In the past five years, Africa's PR and media landscape has experienced profound changes, driven by technological advancements and shifting audience behaviours. One of the most significant shifts has been the rise of digital-first media, which has democratized content creation and distribution. A campaign that exemplifies this shift is the #EndSARS movement in Nigeria. It showcased how social media platforms became powerful tools for activism, enabling grassroots voices to challenge narratives and demand accountability.

## AI as Both Ally and Adversary

*30 % engagement lift from AI-driven sentiment insights | Fighting algorithm-fuelled misinformation in live campaigns | Human oversight remains non-negotiable*

**Q   And the downside?**

However, AI can complicate media efforts, particularly when it comes to misinformation. During a recent campaign, we faced challenges in countering false narratives that arose from algorithmically generated content. It underscored the importance of human oversight in AI applications

**Q   Which youth or grassroots movement has most influenced mainstream narratives?**

Youth-led movements, like the Feminist Coalition, have significantly influenced mainstream narratives. Their digital activism during the #EndSARS protests demonstrated how grassroots movements can reshape public discourse and compel traditional media outlets to cover issues they may have overlooked.

## Digital Platforms as the New Town Square

*TikTok for youth environmental activism | WhatsApp newsletters for intimate brand relationships | Creators who feel like friends, not advertisers*

**Q   How have TikTok, WhatsApp and similar platforms changed brand–audience relationships?**

Digital-first platforms such as TikTok and WhatsApp newsletters have revolutionised audience engagement in Africa. They allow brands to connect with younger audiences in more authentic and relatable ways. A standout campaign was the #NoMorePlastic initiative, which utilised TikTok to engage youth on environmental issues, driving awareness and advocacy.

## Ethics, Authenticity & Owning Our Stories

*Algorithms reward outrage over truth | Community collaboration as authenticity insurance | "Our Stories" initiative puts local voices on global stages*

# DR YETTY OGUNNUBI →   Q&A

**Q    What's the biggest authenticity challenge in an AI-driven world?**

Maintaining authenticity and ethical storytelling in an AI-driven environment poses challenges, especially when algorithms prioritise engagement over truth.We faced a dilemma with a campaign that involved sensitive community issues. Balancing storytelling that resonated with audiences while respecting the subjects' dignity required thoughtful consideration and dialogue

**Q    What will separate the next generation of African PR professionals?**

The next generation of PR and media professionals in Africa will need a blend of technical skills, creativity, and cultural intelligence. Data literacy, digital content creation, and a deep understanding of ethical storytelling will be crucial. I recommend mentorship programs that connect aspiring professionals with industry leaders to foster skill development

**Q    How can African stories be told powerfully and responsibly globally?**

To ensure local stories are represented responsibly, African PR professionals must prioritise collaboration with community voices. An example of success is the "Our Stories" initiative, which empowered local storytellers to share their narratives on global platforms, ensuring authenticity and representation.

**The Class of 2030**

*Data literacy + cultural intelligence + ethical creativity | VR/AR-powered immersive storytelling | Africa leading, not following, global PR trends*

**Q    Your 2030 vision for African PR and media?**

Imagining the PR and media industry in Africa in 2030, I envision a landscape where technology and human creativity coexist seamlessly. We will see more immersive storytelling through virtual and augmented reality, a greater emphasis on ethical practices, and diverse voices leading the conversation. The future is bright, and I believe our collective efforts will pave the way for innovative and impactful communication.

THOUGHT LEADER

EMMA WENANI

# Q&A

## EMMA WENANI →

**GLOBAL MEDIA Alliance**
TALK TO US. TALK TO AFRICA

**CHIEF DIRECTOR, GLOBAL MEDIA ALLIANCE (GMA), ACCRA, GHANA**

**Q** **Tell us your name, role, and a bit about your journey in PR.**

My name is Emma Wenani, Chief Director at Global Media Alliance (GMA), arguably one of Ghana's leading Communications agencies. I lead a high-performing team in executing integrated strategies and campaigns that span public relations, crisis management, digital transformation and brand strategy for leading telecommunication, banking and finance, technology, agriculture, FMCG, motor etc. institutions. In my role, I am focused on leveraging strategic communications and marketing to drive measurable business growth and market differentiation across West Africa.

My journey in Public Relations and Media spans over two decades (interspersed with years when I practiced Human Resource Management) during which I've had the privilege of leading diverse communication strategies for various brands, fostering stakeholder relationships, and guiding teams to adapt to the ever-evolving communications landscape.

### The Great Convergence

*Traditional media merging with digital | Social media now Africa's primary news source | Crises explode in minutes, not days*

**Q** **What have been the most striking shifts in Africa's PR and media landscape over the past five years?**

Over the past five years, Africa's PR and media landscape has experienced a remarkable transformation, and the below are some of the shifts noticed:

- Traditional media is slowly merging with digital storytelling, while data-driven insights and social listening now influence communication strategies.

- Influencer Marketing has also become a core strategy when it comes to brands marketing themselves. The growth here as well is that brands have been able to capitalize on various levels of influencers to reach various audiences.

- Social Media has become a primary news source. This is because a lot of people spend time online and therefore are able to get news here faster as compared to other traditional platforms. The cons here is that crisis escalates faster, there is a higher expectation from brands to respond faster and there is also a lot of misinformation that can be spread on social media.

## EMMA WENANI → Q&A

### AI as Daily Co-Pilot

*Real-time media monitoring across radio, TV, print and social | Predictive analytics for cultural shifts | AI drafts reports so humans can focus on strategy*

**Q    How is AI already embedded at Global Media Alliance?**

AI is gradually becoming an integral part of how we operate at GMA. From media monitoring and sentiment analysis tools to predictive analytics for campaign performance, AI helps us to understand audience insights in real time and advise our clients as well.

On media monitoring, we are able to track mentions across radio, TV, blogs and social media. With this, insights can be provided on tone and sentiment as well as competitor activities. AI tools have helped us categorize audiences by age, gender, interests, online behavior, consumption and buying habits etc. This helps to make messaging to these audiences more targeted and effective.

We can also use AI for trend forecasting such as consumer demands and upcoming cultural shifts. This helps PR and media teams to refine their strategies and be more futuristic in focus.
Last but not least, AI tools have helped with efficiency in doing work such as drafting client reports, media coverage summaries and generating industry insights that can be used to advise and prepare on strategies.

### Digital-First = Human-First

*TikTok & podcasts bypass gatekeepers | | #EndSARS & #FixTheCountry showed the power of digital communities*

**Q    How have TikTok, podcasts and WhatsApp changed the game?**

Digital-first platforms such as TikTok, podcasts, and WhatsApp communities have transformed how African audiences consume content, favoring immediacy, authenticity, and interactivity.
Some of the key drivers include:

- **More Direct, Authentic Brand-Audience Connection:** Platforms like TikTok and podcasts bypass traditional media gatekeepers. Brands can go directly to audiences in creative and less formal ways. This fosters authentic storytelling, because creators are often "real people" not polished corporate spokespeople, which resonates more with young and digital-savvy Africans. WhatsApp newsletters (or broadcast lists) enable institutions to reach people directly in their private space, offering curated content and building ongoing relationships.

- **Faster Feedback Loops and Real-Time Insights:** With social and messaging platforms, institutions can get instant feedback on campaigns, policies, or products. They can test ideas, run live Q&A sessions and measure sentiment immediately which improves how they shape their communications strategy. Campaigns like **#EndSARS** and **#FixTheCountry** demonstrated how digital communities can shape public discourse and demand accountability, prompting people to become more responsive and socially aware.

## EMMA WENANI  → Q&A

Implications for brands and institutions include:

- Creating a tailored content strategy where brands partner with local creators to produce culturally relevant, platform-native content (TikTok, podcast episodes, WhatsApp newsletters).
- Investing in training and fair pay for creators (e.g., via brand partnerships or supporting platform-bank relationships) can pay off in loyalty and reach.
- Messaging Apps can act as distribution channels where institutions leverage WhatsApp for distributing newsletters, policy updates or campaigns to reach communities directly.
- Use social listening, real-time feedback, and data analysis to refine brand communication quickly.
- Use podcast series to build thought leadership, educate audiences and engage deeply on complex issues e.g., finance, health, etc.

### Ethics & Owning the African Narrative

*Speed vs. accuracy | AI deepfakes threaten trust | The danger of "conflict-only" election coverage | Local creators as global translators*

**Q** **What keeps you up at night on the ethics front?**

One major challenge has been maintaining balance between data-driven targeting and preserving empathy in narratives. We've learned that real impact comes when technology amplifies, rather than replaces, genuine human stories. Another issue is speed over accuracy which may push storytellers to publish before verifying facts, cut corners, overlook details or follow narratives without contextual accuracy.

AI can automate various creative processes such as copywriting, editing, design and to an extent data interpretation. Overuse of automation of these processes however can cause loss of originality, reduction in cultural and localized nuances, and decreased appreciation of the craft.

AI tools can also create highly believable fake images, AI-generated articles, misleading videos, and fake voice recordings. This makes it harder for audiences, when not careful, to distinguish truth from manipulation and increases the responsibility on brands to show verification and credibility.

**Q** **How can African PR or Media professionals ensure that local stories are represented responsibly and powerfully on global digital platforms? Any examples of success or missed opportunities?**

- **Tell Stories With Context:** Global audiences often misunderstand African narratives because context is missing. Professionals must therefore explain the why and not just the what. An example of a missed opportunity is the continued coverage of African elections which more often than not focuses on conflict over issues. Many African journalists do not provide enough context or proactive narratives.

- **Own the Narrative Before International Media Does:** If local communicators don't create strong content early, global media will fill the void, often inaccurately. We can own the narrative by producing thought leadership articles, creating short-form video explainers, providing high-quality images/video for global media.

- **Collaborate with Local Creators and Not Just Corporate Voices:** Creators are now the global translators of African culture. African PR teams should partner with micro-influencers rooted in culture, empower storytellers who use local languages, co-create content with "everyday experts" like chefs, historians, stylists, etc.

## EMMA WENANI  →  Q&A

### *The Class of 2030*

*Cultural fluency + AI mastery + rapid-format agility | PR moves from support function to board-level driver | Reputation becomes a strategic asset, not deliverable*

**Q**   **What will define the next generation of African PR leaders?**

Future PR leaders must be able to navigate Africa's diverse cultural contexts, understanding not only national differences but also regional, linguistic, generational, and diaspora sensitivities. They must build a mindset of local first but global always.

They must be adept at crafting stories that resonate deeply at home while remaining legible and compelling to global audiences. AI won't replace communicators, but those who leverage AI will outperform those who don't. Professionals will need to use AI tools for insight generation, content iteration, and campaign strategies.

Africa's media consumers move fast between TikTok, WhatsApp Channels, Reels, X, podcasts, and local language content platforms. Media and PR professionals therefore must understand emerging formats, create content for diverse channels such as audio, short video, longform, and interactive media, and be comfortable with rapid testing of strategies and content.

**Q**   **Your 2030 vision for the industry?**

By 2030, I imagine the PR and media Industry in Africa will:

- Communication leaders become strategic advisors, and PR is no longer a support function. It becomes a core driver of business, governance, and diplomacy. Reputation becomes a strategic asset and not just a PR deliverable.

- Thanks to AI audience segmentation, brands will deliver location-specific campaigns. This will reshape PR from "mass messaging" to "precise storytelling."

- Trust and authenticity will become the currency of communication. As misinformation rises, African audiences in 2030 will value verified sources, transparent storytelling, local-language journalism, and community-owned media. Reputation management will be more about building credibility ecosystems than controlling narratives.

- Many PR agencies and newsrooms in Africa will operate as human-led, AI-enabled content studios. It would be great to see AI co-pilots for writing, sentiment tracking, and crisis detection, automated monitoring dashboards pulling cross-platform metrics from TikTok, WhatsApp Channels, X etc. The differentiator won't be using AI anymore; it will be using it ethically and creatively.

THOUGHT LEADER

FLORA LIMUKI

# Q&A

## FLORA LIMUKI →

**spiro**
Energy on the **move**

### HEAD OF STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS, SPIRO (AFRICA'S LARGEST ELECTRIC-MOBILITY COMPANY)

My name is Flora Limukii, Head of Strategic Communications at Spiro, and I leverage my background as a journalist to shape my PR journey. At Spiro, I lead communications efforts aimed at promoting sustainable mobility in Africa, positioning the company as a leader in the electric vehicle sector. My responsibilities include managing media relations, crafting narratives, and fostering relationships with stakeholders. I am passionate about advocating for electric mobility and engaging communities in EV education, focusing on innovation and its impact on urban transportation and economic empowerment in Africa.

### The Influencer Revolution

*Traditional gatekeepers sidelined | Climate & EV conversations now live on TikTok & Instagram | Co-creation, not dictation, is the new rule*

**Q** **What has been the single biggest shift in the past five years?**

From my vantage point, one of the most significant shifts in Africa`s PR and media landscape over the past five years has been the explosive rise of influencer marketing and creator-driven content.

Traditional media gatekeepers no longer hold exclusive power over narratives. Social media influencers, content creators, and digital-first personalities have become critical voices shaping public opinion, consumer behavior, and even policy conversations across the continent. Brands and organizations can no longer rely solely on press releases and mainstream media coverage; they must engage authentically with influencers who have built trust and community with their audiences.

A campaign that exemplifies this shift is the way sustainable mobility and climate action conversations have moved from boardrooms to TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube. We`ve seen African climate activists, tech reviewers, and lifestyle influencers become powerful advocates for electric vehicles and green technology, often reaching millions more people than traditional media outlets.

## FLORA LIMUKI　→　Q&A

Their authentic storytelling, relatable content, and ability to make complex topics accessible have transformed how we approach public education and behavior change campaigns.

What makes this shift particularly powerful in Africa is how influencers are bridging the gap between global sustainability conversations and local realities. They are translating international climate goals into content that resonates with everyday Africans, showing how EVs can save money, create jobs, or reduce pollution in their specific communities.

For PR professionals, this means we must be strategic about identifying the right influencer partners, co-creating content rather than dictating messages, and measuring impact beyond traditional metrics like media impressions. It's about building genuine relationships and empowering influencers to tell stories in ways that feel authentic to their audiences.

### AI as Accelerator — With Guardrails

*60,000+ rider data points analysed in real time | Predictive sentiment across eight markets | When fake Spiro bike images almost derailed a campaign*

**Q**　　**How is Spiro actually using AI today?**

Spiro leverages AI technologies in its smart factory and battery management systems within Kenya's AI ecosystem, aiming to position the country as Africa's leading AI innovation hub. The company is also exploring data analytics and AI to enhance customer insight, monitor media sentiment, discover storytelling opportunities, and refine its communications strategy across its eight African markets.

By analyzing rider behavior patterns from our 60,000 plus riders, tracking social media sentiment regarding e-mobility adoption, identifying important communication opportunities in our markets, and employing this is especially powerful in African markets, where local context, language, and shared cultural references matter deeply. Using predictive analytics to determine which messages resonate most with various customer segments, from boda-boda riders to policymakers, across our operations in Rwanda, Kenya, Nigeria, and beyond, Spiro uses AI and data-driven insights to inform our PR and marketing strategy.

**Q**　　**A moment when AI both helped and hurt?**

Yes, I am familiar with instances when AI both improved and complicated public relations campaigns. For instance, we leveraged AI technologies to find current themes and optimize content for engagement during a recent Spiro marketing campaign on X, which initially helped us swiftly reach a larger audience. Fake pictures of Spiro bikes started to circulate on X at the same time that some influencers who weren't part of the campaign were subtly decampaigning, raising the possibility of a false narrative surrounding the brand. Furthermore, fads like lip-syncing pose a risk because, if they become popular, they may distort the original message.

This experience demonstrated that while AI can increase efficiency and reach, it is unable to fully take into account human sentiment, community dynamics, or cultural context. The breakthrough occurred when we integrated AI insights with meticulous human oversight, keeping an eye on conversations, properly directing trends, and clearing up false information to make sure our messaging remained genuine and consistent with brand values. It demonstrated that while AI is an effective tool, human judgment is still essential for preserving credibility and narrative control in public relations.

## FLORA LIMUKI → Q&A

### TikTok, Podcasts & WhatsApp as the New Public Square

*Creators turning complex EV topics into relatable content | Kenyan podcasters building trust through long-form conversation | Gen Z breaking down tax bills in 15-second videos*

**Q**   **Who is redefining the space right now?**

That`s an excellent question; there`s a lot to consider. TikTok, podcasts, and WhatsApp newsletters are examples of digital-first platforms that are actually changing how African audiences interact with organizations and companies. Instead of just promoting polished advertisements, TikTok allows brands to be imaginative storytellers. According to social landscape assessments, marketers that work with the organic flow of TikTok discussions are the source of engagement. African producers use TikTok as a business tool in addition to for amusement. TikTok`s monetization strategies and independent brand relationships let creators create scalable companies and earn real money.

African Enterprise. In Africa, podcasts are becoming more and more popular, particularly in areas like media/arts, self-help, and culture. By connecting with meaningful storylines rather than merely transactional information, these long-form exchanges provide brands and institutions a chance to develop greater trust. **Roy Kanyi** Featured in a list of "fast-rising micro-influencers" in Kenya. **Twiva** His TikToks are more educational; he shares well-researched, informative content, which aligns with communications/content strategy work.

**Kenyan Podcasters/Communications Professionals include the following;**

**Janice Kemoli.** A veteran marketer/branding expert in Kenya, she was featured on the Pure Digital Passion podcast. Medium. Her career spans big brands (like Coca-Cola, Barclays, etc.), which gives her a lot of credibility in communications and marketing.
**Adelle Onyango.** Media personality, social activist, and podcaster (Legally Clueless). Wikipedia + 1, She studied public relations, and her podcast often addresses social issues, personal stories, and brand-relevant conversations; she's very credible and influential.
**Ian Kuria Maina.** Host of a digital marketing podcast (SEO, web design, content marketing). Jeder Agency

**Q**   **A youth-led moment that changed everything?**

Youth-led and grassroots digital movements are increasingly shaping mainstream PR and media narratives across the region. Young people today are not waiting for traditional gatekeepers; they are creating real-time stories, framing issues in their own language, and mobilising communities entirely through digital platforms. One moment that really stood out to me was Kenya's **#RejectFinanceBill2024** movement. Gen Z used TikTok, X, and WhatsApp to break down complex tax proposals into simple content, organize decentralised protests, and livestream events as they unfolded. Their speed and clarity forced mainstream media, brands, and government institutions to shift their messaging within hours. It was a powerful reminder that narrative ownership now starts online with young creators, not in newsrooms."

We're seeing similar patterns in Tanzania. Youth-driven digital communities, from hashtag movements like **#ChangeTanzania** to civic conversations happening through informal TikTok series and neighbourhood- based **'Mtaa Talks,'** are influencing how national issues are discussed. They are demanding transparency, pushing institutions to respond openly, and shaping public sentiment long before traditional media catches up. For communicators, these movements highlight an important shift: effective PR today means listening to grassroots digital voices, understanding their pace and tone, and engaging authentically rather than reacting defensively.

## FLORA LIMUKI  →  Q&A

Overall, youth-led digital activism has become one of the most significant forces reshaping how narratives form in East Africa. It has elevated the need for transparency, accelerated the news cycle, and made authenticity non-negotiable for any brand or institution trying to communicate in this environment.

### Ethics & Keeping Stories Human

*AI can't feel cultural nuance | When excluded influencers tried to "decampaign" | Authenticity is non-negotiable in unpredictable digital Africa*

### Q  Biggest authenticity challenge in the AI era?

In an AI-driven, algorithmic media landscape, upholding authenticity and moral storytelling is becoming increasingly difficult. While AI can assist with content creation, engagement prediction, and even trend identification, it is unable to comprehend human sentiment, nuance, or community dynamics. For example, we encountered a situation on X where a group of influencers complained about not being part of a Spiro marketing campaign. They could have distorted our messaging and impacted brand perception with their decampaigning, which included subtle criticism and bad online conversation.

However, while trends like lip-syncing offer chances for interaction, they may inadvertently alter a campaign's tone or narrative. We carefully observed conversations, guided messaging to guarantee authenticity, and combined AI insights with human oversight to navigate this. The realization that ethical storytelling today is about carefully managing engagement, respecting audiences and influencers, and upholding brand integrity even in unpredictable digital contexts rather than controlling every encounter was the breakthrough.

### Q  How can African PR or media professionals ensure that local stories are represented responsibly and powerfully on global digital platforms?

By emphasizing authenticity, cultural context, and local voices, African PR and media professionals can guarantee that local stories are ethically and powerfully conveyed on international platforms. Successful examples include Kenya's **#RejectFinanceBill2024** campaign, in which Gen Z activists broke down a complicated tax bill into shareable content on X, TikTok, and WhatsApp while live-streaming events and organizing protests, and Nigeria's **#EndSARS** movement, which began as a youth-led protest but gained international attention while keeping local voices central. These initiatives garnered international notice while controlling the local narrative.

However, during early COVID-19 communications in Kenya, there was a relatable missed opportunity:official social media posts were factual but lacked cultural sensitivity and did not involve local influencers, making the narrative less relevant and shareable. This demonstrates that tales require local context, teamwork, and genuine interaction in order to properly resonate, despite their worldwide reach.

### The Class of 2030

*Digital fluency + cultural intuition + ethical agility | VR/AR-powered immersive African stories | Africa exporting narratives, not importing templates*

## FLORA LIMUKI  → Q&A

**Q**   **What skills and mindsets will matter most?**

African PR and media professionals of the future will require a blend of digital, ethical, and strategic attitudes. In addition to being culturally aware, genuine, and able to adjust to rapidly changing trends, they must be digitally proficient, comprehending social media, AI technologies, and algorithmic storytelling.

Because stories and narratives can spread quickly and need to be handled carefully, critical thinking, empathy, and crisis management skills will also be crucial. Learning from seasoned professionals and receiving mentoring is crucial. For instance,
Noella Mutanda is a seasoned PR strategist known for her work in ethical and strategic communications; Edith Kimani is an experienced moderator with expertise in audience engagement and media management; Gitura Mwaura is a media consultant and writer deeply involved in development storytelling throughout Kenya and Rwanda; and Dorothy Ooko, Africa PR Lead at Google, provides advice on tech, advocacy, and strategic communications. Workshops from the African Media Initiative and Strathmore Media &amp; PR are two examples of programs and masterclasses that combine digital skills with ethics and strategic storytelling to prepare young professionals to develop effective campaigns while ethically influencing opinion.

**Q**   **Your 2030 vision?**

By 2030, I see Africa`s PR and media sectors as being intimately connected, digitally advanced, and data-driven, yet firmly anchored in regional authenticity and culture. Routine chores like media monitoring, trend prediction, and initial content creation will be handled by artificial intelligence (AI) and algorithmic tools, freeing up human specialists to concentrate on strategy, storytelling, and moral decision-making. A new generation of African creatives will combine technology, culture, and social impact to produce hyper- personalized, interactive campaigns that are co-created with communities. Immersion storytelling will heavily rely on virtual reality and augmented reality. By immersing viewers in a completely digital world, virtual reality allows users to explore a 3D model of a city or stroll through a virtual museum. Snapchat and Instagram filters, interactive product presentations, and apps that allow you to see furniture in your house are examples of augmented reality , which superimposes digital features on the physical world. (VR) and (AR) may provide audiences with engaging and memorable brand story experiences in PR and media.

Examples of this trend are already occurring across Africa. For example, South African media companies have developed Virtual Reality (VR) news experiences to immerse viewers in social or environmental stories, while some Kenyan entrepreneurs have experimented with Augmented Reality (AR) campaigns to display items in virtual settings. These strategies show how technology may spread African stories throughout the world while maintaining their authenticity and cultural roots. In addition, I see cross-border cooperation becoming commonplace, with African voices creating global narratives rather than responding to them.

African stories will be brought to life through more immersive storytelling that makes use of virtual reality and augmented reality and other cutting-edge forms. Professionals will be guided by ethical frameworks and media literacy to strike a balance between engagement and integrity, making sure that authenticity isn`t lost in the quest for virality. In the end, African PR and media in 2030 will be creative, socially conscious, and powerful, influencing not just local but also international perceptions of the continent.
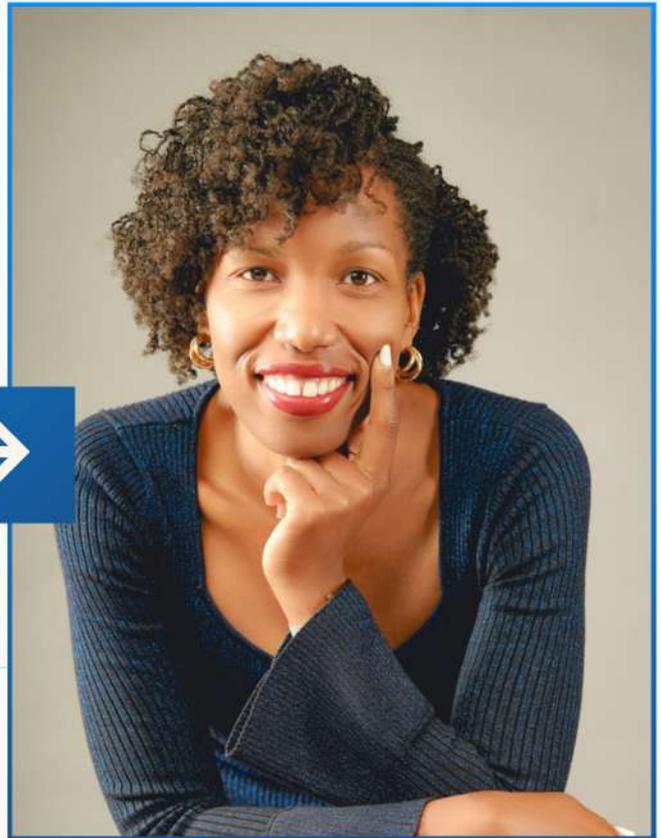
THOUGHT LEADER

LORRAINE ONDURU

GLASSHOUSEPR | 13 YEARS OF TELLING YOUR STORY

# Q&A

## LORRAINE ONDURU →

**MAJESTY**
PUBLISHING HOUSE
—AFRICA—

**PAN AFRICAN COMMUNICATIONS CONSULTANT WITH 15 YEARS EXPERIENCE IN COMMUNICATIONS | AUTHOR**

### The Great In-Housing Revolution

*Tools like PRevail PR bring media monitoring inside*

**Q** **What has been the most striking change you've seen in African PR over the past five years?**

The biggest shift is that brands and organisations no longer need to pay huge retainers for basic media monitoring and sentiment research. Tools like PRevail https://prevail.africa/) now let even mid-sized companies track coverage, measure sentiment and manage distribution in-house, in real time, at a fraction of the old cost. What used to require a team of juniors clipping newspapers or an external agency burning hours is now a dashboard anyone on the comms team can open. It has completely changed power dynamics, budgets and speed.

### AI as Refiner, Never as Writer

*Thoughts first, AI second | Fact-checking, flow and polish only | "I will not outsource my thinking muscle"*

**Q** **How do you personally use AI?**

I am very deliberate. I write everything in my own voice first the thinking, the structure, the key messages. Only then do I bring in AI to fact-check, tighten sentences, suggest better flow or translate. I never let it originate the thinking. As a writer and strategist, I need to keep my own muscle strong. AI is the editor that stays late, not the brain that does the creating.

**Q** **What does this mean for agency structures?**

The classic pyramid interns, junior executives doing manual research and clipping is collapsing. Those tasks are now one subscription away. Agencies will have to shrink headcount at the bottom and invest in fewer, higher-value strategists who can turn data into genuine insight. The future belongs to people who can deliver "this is what the data actually means for your business" rather than "here are 200 screenshots of your brand mentions."

### Everyone Is a News Outlet

*Mobile penetration turned citizens into real-time reporters | Podcasts as the new rolling news | Influencer tiers about to disappear*

# LORRAINE ONDURU  → | Q&A

## Q How has digital-first media changed the game?

News no longer waits for the 9 p.m. bulletin. If something happens in Westlands, it's on TikTok before Citizen TV can send a crew. Podcasts now break news minute-by-minute with analysis they are effectively radio stations in your pocket. The old influencer hierarchy (macro, micro, nano) is crumbling too. Relevance, consistency and trust matter more than follower count.

If you have something valuable to say, you can become influential overnight.

### Ethics, Guardrails and the Thin Line

*Excitement → Experimentation → "Wait, we need rules" | Regulation must protect without killing innovation | Africa-led solutions over imported frameworks*

## Q Where do you stand on ethics in AI and fast media?

Every new technology goes through the same cycle: excitement, wild experimentation, then "oh no, we need guardrails." We saw it with mobile money, ride-hailing, now AI. The key is co-creating regulation with the private sector so we protect people from bad actors without strangling innovation. African regulators and tech builders must write the rules together we cannot just import frameworks that don't understand our realities.

## Q Will AI take jobs?

It may shrink some junior support roles, but in Africa that contraction may come slower because we still need humans to train humans. Overall I see expansion: smarter, higher-value roles, more Africans building the actual tools, and our industry moving from service provider to global thought leader. The future is not job loss it's job evolution, and Africa is perfectly placed to ride the wave.

## Q A grassroots movement that caught your attention?

Jacob's Ladder Africa going campus to campus, telling students they don't have to wait for graduation to start building green careers or businesses. The energy in those rooms is electric students standing up saying "I already started a recycling startup with my classmates" or "I'm volunteering with a climate NGO." It's youth refusing to wait for permission and using digital tools to organise, learn and scale from day one.

### Youth Taking Their Future into Their Own Hands

*Jacob's Ladder Africa touring universities | Students starting businesses while still in school | Mindset shift: "I don't wait for employment, I create opportunity"*

### The Class of 2030

*Adaptability + self-learning + strategic insight | Africa-centric tech that complements, never replaces, human brilliance | Exporting African narratives, not importing templates*

## Q What skills and mindsets will define the next generation?

Adaptability is non-negotiable the pace of change will only accelerate. Lifelong self-learning will be table stakes. Strategic insight (turning data into wisdom) will be the premium skill AI cannot replicate. And most exciting: African communicators will stop looking outward for answers less and less. We will build Africa-centric tools, tell Africa-centric stories, and export them to the world. The narrative is flipping we are no longer adopting, we are originating.
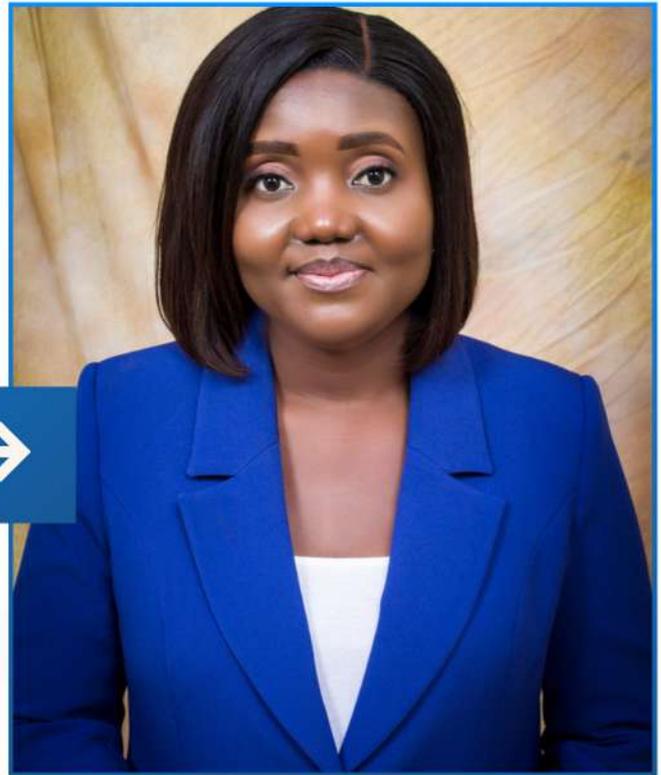
THOUGHT LEADER

PRINCESS SEKYERE BIH

GLASSHOUSEPR | 13 YEARS OF TELLING YOUR STORY

# Q&A

## PRINCESS SEKYERE BIH →

**Kingdom**
concepts consult

### DIRECTOR, KINGDOM CONCEPTS CONSULT, ACCRA, GHANA

My name is Princess Sekyere Bih, Director of Kingdom Concepts Consult; a strategic communications and stakeholder relations consultancy specializing in development communications. With over a decade of experience, I have led high-impact campaigns across the corporate, government, and development sectors, with a strong focus on stakeholder engagement, digital strategy, and impact-driven storytelling.

Before establishing my agency, I worked with several reputable institutions including theWorld Health Organization (WHO), Western Union, and McOttley Capital, where I served as Head of Corporate Affairs. I have also contributed to continental initiatives as Communication Lead on the Technical Team of the African Youth and Governance Convergence (AYGC) and Team Lead at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW).

Beyond consulting, I am the Founder and Publisher of The Intelligent Lady a women empowerment brand, and the Founder of The Intelligent Lady Academy, a capacity building platform that nurtures and equips young women across Africa with leadership, entrepreneurship, and life skills to thrive in life.

I previously served as Executive Director of Pathway for Girls and Boys and President of the African Youth and Governance Convergence, roles that reflect my ongoing commitment to youth development, gender empowerment, and social transformation through communication

### From Broadcast to Narrative Ecosystems

*Shift from one-way messaging to sustained digital storytelling | "Spotlight on Ghana" aviation campaign | Triple S border-security initiative*

**Q**　**What have been the biggest shifts in Africa's PR and media landscape over the past five years?**

The defining move has been from traditional broadcast outreach to insight-driven, narrative-led digital engagement. We no longer "place stories" we orchestrate ongoing ecosystems of conversation. The "Spotlight on Ghana" campaign for a major aviation client showed this perfectly: instead of press releases and events, we built months of social storytelling around Ghanaian culture, heritage and travel experiences. Real-time metrics let us refine content as audiences responded, creating deeper resonance with local and diaspora communities. Similarly, our "Triple S – Secure Borders, Stable Country, Safe People" campaign for a national security agency combined digital outreach with community dialogue, proving that modern African PR is about stakeholder relationships, not just message dissemination.

# PRINCESS SEKYERE BIH →

## AI as Insight Engine — With Human Guardrails

*Brandwatch for real-time narrative tracking | Detecting migration-unemployment links online | When AI storyboards missed cultural depth*

**Q   How is your agency using AI today?**

We rely on AI for media monitoring, sentiment analysis, coverage tracking and content optimisation. Brandwatch was invaluable in the border-security campaign it flagged emerging links between migration narratives and youth unemployment across forums and WhatsApp channels, letting us pivot from risk-focused to empowerment-driven messaging.

## Ethics & Authentic African Representation

*Algorithmic pressure for virality vs. depth | AI drafts lacking nuance | Local co-creation as the antidote*

**Q   What challenges exist in maintaining authenticity and representation?**

AI-driven environments often prioritize speed and virality over depth, risking misrepresentation. In Ghana's Planting for Food and Jobs campaign, AI-generated visuals lacked cultural nuance until we integrated authentic farmer stories and local dialects. Similarly, the Triple S campaign prioritized community-centered engagement to build trust. For African professionals, responsible representation means co-creating with local voices, validating AI-assisted content, and ensuring transparencyBy insisting on local co-creation, cultural validation and community voices. Engage micro-creators who speak the language and live the reality. Disclose AI use openly. Measure success by impact, not just impressions. The Planting for Food and Jobs experience showed that human-anchored storytelling — even when starting from AI drafts — builds far stronger trust than automated content ever could.

# Q&A

**Q   A moment when AI both helped and complicated things?**

In the "Planting for Food and Jobs" campaign for the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, early AI-generated storyboards for youth and farmer audiences lacked cultural nuance and local context. The drafts felt generic and disconnected. We solved it by layering in authentic farmer testimonies, regional imagery and local dialects under strict human oversight. The breakthrough reaffirmed that AI delivers speed and foresight, but only human cultural intelligence ensures authenticity and trust especially in development communications where credibility is everything.

## Digital Platforms as Conversation Spaces

*TikTok, Reels & WhatsApp Channels drive peer-to-peer engagement | #NoGreeDiscrimination youth campaign | ENOUGH anti-hunger initiative*

**Q   How have digital-first platforms changed audience engagement?**

Platforms like TikTok, Instagram Reels, podcasts, and WhatsApp Channels have transformed engagement, especially among youth. Campaigns such as Ghana's #NoGreeDiscrimination and World Vision's ENOUGH illustrate how creator-led, mobile-native formats drive advocacy and participation. Grassroots digital movements now shape mainstream narratives, demanding authenticity, peer-to-peer storytelling, and community-driven engagement.

## The Class of 2030

*Strategic insight + digital fluency + cultural intelligence + purpose-led mindset | Pan-African, mobile-first, creator-powered campaigns | Impact over impressions*

**Q   How have digital-first platforms changed audience engagement?**

By 2030, Africa's PR and media industry will be digitally advanced yet firmly rooted in authenticity and culture. Routine tasks will be automated by AI, freeing professionals to focus on strategy, storytelling, and ethical decision-making. Campaigns will be pan-African, mobile-first, and creator-led, anchored in micro-influencers and community voices rather than legacy broadcast dominance. AI-powered insights will guide strategy, but human cultural curators will ensure ethical interpretation and contextual relevance. Success will be measured not by visibility alone, but by purpose, inclusion, and social impact. Transparency, co-creation, and authenticity will define the ecosystem, positioning African communicators as global narrative shapers while staying true to local realities.

THOUGHT LEADER

LEKHA SEEBALUCK
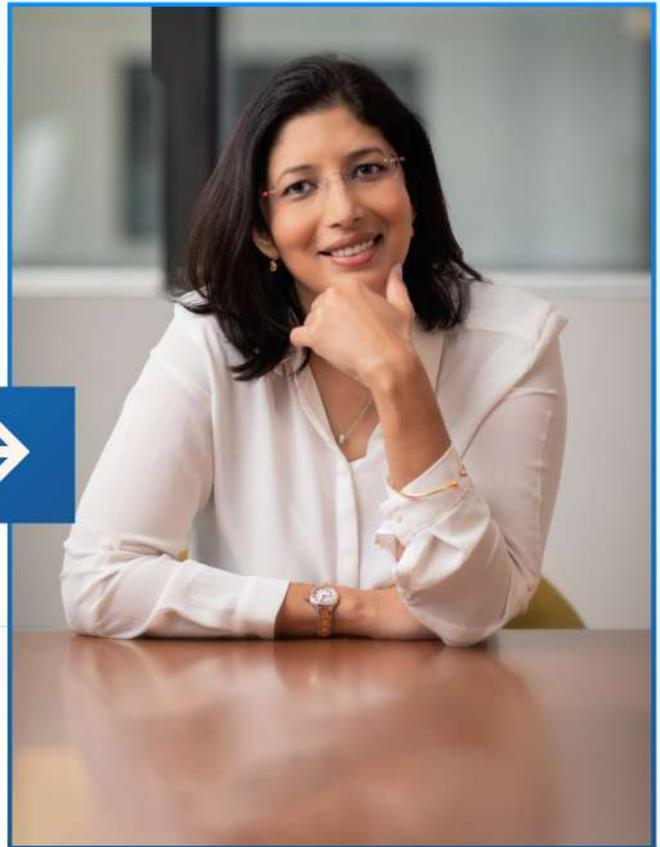
GLASSHOUSEPR | 13 YEARS OF TELLING YOUR STORY

# Q&A

## LEKHA SEEBALUCK →

**blast | Burson**

**MANAGING DIRECTOR, BLAST PR & EVENTS LTD
(BLAST BURSON), MAURITIUS & RÉUNION ISLAND**

25+ YEARS IN COMMUNICATIONS I 20 YEARS LEADING THE BURSON
AFFILIATE I FORMER JOURNALIST TURNED CRISIS STRATEGIST

### The Day the Playbook Died

*From press agentry to real-time digital firestorms | MV Wakashio oil spill crisis driven by Facebook Live | Citizen journalists now lead, traditional media follows*

> **Q** **What have been the most seismic shifts in Africa's PR and media landscape over the past five years?**

The most significant shift in PR and crisis management has been sudden and transformative, driven by digital platforms blurring the lines between media, technology, and information consumption. With internet penetration in Sub-Saharan Africa rising sharply, crises now unfold in real time, amplified by citizen journalists and influencers whose reach often surpasses traditional outlets. The **MV Wakashio oil spill in Mauritius (2020)** epitomized this change: a Facebook livestream by activists became the crisis itself, forcing immediate, unscripted responses and rendering traditional playbooks obsolete. Since then, digital creators have emerged as powerful voices, but without the accountability structures of traditional media. This creates new grey areas where corrections or clarifications are not guaranteed, and reputational harm can spread instantly across platforms like TikTok and WhatsApp. Modern crises now demand a blend of **traditional PR principles** relationship building, cultural sensitivity, stakeholder trust with **deep platform-specific expertise** and rapid response protocols. The paradox is that while digital marketing dominates, timeless PR fundamentals remain essential. Finally, measurement frameworks are being redefined. Traditional metrics like Advertising Value Equivalence (AVE) no longer capture the impact of digital virality, where a single online post can outpace the reach of a major newspaper cover story.

### AI as Accelerator, Not Replacement

*Blast Tracker: Africa-centric media intelligence | AI for research & targeting | When in-house teams used AI crisis statements without judgment*

## LEKHA SEEBALUCK　→　Q&A

**Q**　**How is AI being deployed at Blast and across the sector?**

AI has become particularly valuable for research, content development, and precise audience targeting. We are no longer distributing press releases indiscriminately; instead, we tailor content for specific audiences through LinkedIn articles, digital media, and converging online print channels. A press release today has multiple lives, taking different shapes across diverse platforms.

From an agency perspective, AI significantly reduces task completion time. Yet, the real challenge lies in refining prompts and critically evaluating outputs. Human oversight remains irreplaceable. Too often we see a "sea of sameness," where content strategies look alike because many practitioners rely on the same tools with similar inputs.
For Africa, there is an additional caveat: unlike Europe or North America, our data depth is limited. AI systems trained primarily on Western datasets may lack cultural nuance and contextual relevance for African audiences. This gap is precisely why we developed the Blast Tracker media intelligence platform to deliver culturally intelligent insights that global monitoring services cannot provide

**Q**　**A moment when AI helped or hindered?**

In times of crisis, when information is overwhelming and time is scarce, AI particularly Large Language Models can serve as a valuable checklist. It can review press releases, suggest step-by-step plans, and ensure critical elements are not overlooked.
However, judgment and experience remain irreplaceable. We have seen concerning cases where PR professionals relied on AI to draft crisis statements without applying critical thinking to refine strategy or challenge leadership decisions. This risk is especially evident in cybersecurity incidents, where speed is vital but ethical considerations and transparency cannot be compromised. Used as a replacement for human judgment, AI can complicate rather than strengthen strategic communications.

Research from the **African Public Relations Association (APRA)** and **PRCA Africa's 2025 ethics study**, which surveyed 313 professionals across 24 African countries, confirms this tension. Practitioners are grappling with how AI accelerates communication while raising new ethical concerns around authenticity and transparency. Professional bodies including APRA, PRCA Africa, and national associations are only beginning to address these issues.

**Key questions remain:**
1. W**hat constitutes ethical AI use in crisis communications versus manipulation?**
2. **How do we set standards when clients demand AI-generated content at speeds that bypass human oversight?**

The reality is that technology is evolving faster than professional standards, creating a gap that puts both practitioners and the public at risk.

### *Digital Creators as the New Gatekeepers*

*TikTok damage, WhatsApp virality | Podcasts rival primetime TV | Gen Z Madagascar protests organised via a Facebook page that gained 100,000 followers in days*

## LEKHA SEEBALUCK  →  Q&A

**Q**     **How have digital-first platforms changed engagement?**

While I cannot speak for the entire African landscape, what we are seeing is clear: influencers and individuals with large audiences wield immense power. A single post or video can elevate or severely damage a brand's reputation. Digital platforms have brought brands closer to their audiences, enabling them to humanize themselves in ways traditional media never allowed.

We have managed situations where TikTok creators caused significant reputational harm to institutions and public figures. Yet, when leadership engaged constructively with these creators, valuable lessons emerged about how digital-first crises unfold. Navigating these scenarios requires a hybrid approach: combining traditional PR techniques with platform-specific expertise and cultural fluency.

Podcasts have also become critical channels for meaningful interaction and information dissemination. For certain demographics, being featured on the right podcast can be as influential if not more than appearing on primetime TV or radio. Today's audiences are fragmented yet omnipresent across platforms, and the imperative is clear: brands must meet them wherever they are.

**Q**     **A youth-led movement that redefined the rules?**

We have witnessed powerful examples of how digital platforms are fundamentally reshaping political mobilization. In Nepal, Gen Z protests in September 2025 forced the Prime Minister's resignation, while in New York, young political figures such as newly elected mayor Zohran Mamdani gained traction by bypassing traditional gatekeepers entirely.

The most dramatic regional example is Madagascar. On September 25, 2025, young people identifying as Gen Z Madagascar took to the streets of Antananarivo, initially protesting electricity blackouts, water shortages, and corruption. The movement was organized almost entirely through a Facebook page that amassed over 100,000 followers in just five days. Strikingly, this mobilization occurred outside traditional political structures—there were no formal opposition parties or established civil society organizations leading the charge.

This represents a fundamental shift in how power and narratives operate. How do you conduct stakeholder engagement when the "stakeholder" is a decentralized network of 100,000+ Facebook followers? How do you manage communications when the narrative is shaped in real time by thousands of individual content creators? Traditional stakeholder mapping assumes organized groups with identifiable leadership, but the Madagascar movement was driven by collective grievance amplified through digital platforms.

In Mauritius, we have seen how online backlash can create tangible political consequences. Social media outrage over political nominations led some individuals to decline appointments, as public opinion and commentary exerted immense pressure. Traditional media then amplified these stories, creating a feedback loop where digital sentiment directly shaped mainstream coverage.

The critical question for PR professionals is this: when does online opinion evolve into stakeholder pressure that demands immediate response? In today's environment, by the time stakeholders are mapped and statements drafted, the conversation has already moved on.

**Ethics in the Age of "Seeing Is No Longer Believing"**

*AI deepfakes & viral distortion | Need for disclosure watermarks | Historical storytelling democratised—yet vulnerable to remix and manipulation*

## LEKHA SEEBALUCK → Q&A

### Q Biggest authenticity challenges in an AI-driven world?

We are facing both profound challenges and genuine opportunities but what is missing is a clear framework to distinguish facts from fads, and proper attribution that helps audiences understand what they are truly seeing. It is increasingly difficult to separate AI-generated content from reality. Videos have become so realistic that many struggle to identify authenticity, and malicious actors can weaponize these tools to damage reputations or even rewrite history overnight.

Yet the opportunities are significant. For example, AI could make it possible to produce educational content on slavery or indentured laborers in Mauritius stories that deserve to be told as part of our cultural heritage but have traditionally required resources beyond the reach of smaller markets. Still, this raises complex questions: How much credit belongs to the creator versus the AI tool? Who owns the intellectual property? And how do we ensure historical accuracy when AI-generated scenes may embed bias or distortion? Without oversight from historians and storytellers, truth risks being blurred into fiction.

The algorithmic environment amplifies these risks, rewarding virality and short-form content at the expense of nuance. Misleading headlines, cropped images, and manipulated videos distort reality, while 30-second clips strip away context entirely. This is distortion packaged as information.

Two urgent steps are needed:

1. **Disclosure requirements** – AI-generated or AI-assisted content should carry disclaimers or watermarks, not to shame creators but to help audiences evaluate what they are seeing. "Seeing is believing" no longer applies when fake videos look real.
2. **Attribution and verification frameworks** – Audiences deserve transparency about who created the research, who verified accuracy, and what proportion of content is archival versus AI reconstruction. Think of it like food labeling people should know what they are consuming.

PR professionals cannot throw up their hands at the chaos. We must advocate for disclosure standards, collaborate with policymakers, and involve academics, historians, and cultural custodians to verify sensitive content. Creators must also be trained in ethical AI use it is a tool, not a replacement for research or judgment.
The opportunities are real. The risks are real. The standards, frameworks, and ethical guidelines we establish now will determine whether AI becomes a democratizing force for storytelling or a weapon of disinformation.

### Q What must African professionals do for responsible global representation?

Understanding different platforms and their algorithms is absolutely essential. Even the most compelling story will fail without a strong communication strategy and execution. This raises an important responsibility question:

**Are digital creators, influencers, and large-audience voices producing content ethically?**

**Do they cross-check sources as journalists are expected to, or are they simply chasing virality sometimes at the expense of accuracy?**

In Mauritius, we've seen educators leverage their credibility effectively. According to the Edelman Trust Barometer, teachers are among the most trusted voices globally (74%), second only to scientists. One teacher used her platform not only to reach students but also to share cultural insights with wider audiences, demonstrating how trusted figures can amplify local narratives responsibly.

## LEKHA SEEBALUCK → Q&A

PR professionals have a crucial role in identifying and training such influential voices. At its core, our work is about credibility, authenticity, and facts the same standards long expected of journalism. The opportunities are tremendous, particularly as brands increasingly invest in creators building sustainable careers. But this also raises new questions for our industry: Do these creators now function as PR channels? Should opinion editorials serve as drivers of social media content? These are collective challenges we must address to define the future intersection of PR and digital influence.

### The Class of 2030

*Analytical + critical + ethical + culturally intelligent | From segmented roles to niche data strategists | Synthesis: timeless principles meet African-led technology*

### Q   What skills and mindsets will matter most?

Fundamentally, I believe this: the channel changes, but the principles remain the same. From Gutenberg's printing press to today's digital platforms, what truly matters is the quality and integrity of the content we put into any medium. Technology evolves, but the core of strategic communication endures.

Across platforms, PR professionals must act ethically and exercise sound judgment. This requires a blend of essential competencies:

- **Analytical skills** – the ability to mine and interpret data effectively
- **Critical thinking** – challenging assumptions and pushing back when necessary
- **Research capabilities** – understanding context before crafting messages
- **Ethical reasoning** – knowing when to say no
- **Cultural intelligence** – particularly vital in Africa's diverse contexts

Adaptability – being comfortable with constant change

### Q   Your 2030 vision?

By 2030, PR professionals will need to evolve into data strategists capable of educating multiple generations of stakeholders. Many older politicians and policymakers remain hesitant to embrace AI and digital tools, yet with challenges such as Madagascar's recent unrest and ongoing governance transitions across the continent, PR will play a crucial role in bridging this gap.

Roles will no longer be as segmented as they are today. We will see highly specialized professionals moving beyond generic content creation to advise brands and institutions on building trust and credibility in an increasingly fragmented landscape. At the same time, brands themselves will become media entities and content creators. What must remain constant, however, is alignment with core values and authentic human connections the human element will continue to define successful communications in an automated world.

Africa's digital transformation is already underway. The real question is whether PR and communications professionals will lead it with the sethical frameworks, strategic thinking, and cultural intelligence our continent deserves. The future of PR in Africa is not about choosing between traditional wisdom and new technologies it is about synthesis: maintaining ethical foundations while embracing tools that amplify reach, building trust in an age of misinformation, and leveraging platforms that democratize voice.

**LEKHA SEEBALUCK** → **Q&A**

Most importantly, it is about ensuring African stories are told with authenticity, nuance, and power by Africans who understand the cultural context, speak the languages, and carry the responsibility of representing the continent's complexity to the world. As technology evolves and platforms change, one truth endures: the fundamental human need for authentic connection, ethical storytelling, and trusted communication. That is the foundation on which we must build the next 25 years of African communications.

THOUGHT LEADER

ALEX OWITI

GLASSHOUSEPR

**13** OF
**YEARS** TELLING
YOUR
STORY

# Q&A

## ALEX OWITI →

**alexander pr**
AND COMMUNICATION NETWORK.

### FOUNDER & CEO, ALEXANDER PR AND COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK, NAIROBI, KENYA

I am a self-driven, tech-savvy, and award-winning PR and communications professional with over 18 years of experience across Africa. As Founder and CEO of Alexander PR and Communications Network, I've led reputation-defining campaigns for global and regional brands including Orange Telkom, OPPO, Samsung, Safaricom, LG Electronics, Glenfiddich, Moët Hennessy, and Rémy Martin.

My career highlights include orchestrating Safaricom's CEO succession strategy, managing the Northern White Rhino "World's Most Eligible Bachelor" campaign (which generated over 2.1 billion media impressions and USD 165 million in PR value), and consulting for international partners such as USAID, SIDA, and the MIT Legatum Center. My expertise spans strategic communications, crisis management, government relations, and corporate reputation building

## The PESO Evolution in Digital Africa

*Paid media turns algorithmically precise | Earned media demands data-backed impact | Shared & owned channels drive youth-native storytelling*

**Q** **From your vantage point, what are the most significant shifts you've seen in the PR and media landscape in Africa over the past five years?**

The shifts can best be understood through the PESO model in the digital era:

- **Paid Media:** Algorithm-driven platforms like Google, YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok now allow precise targeting, real-time optimization, and impact measurement beyond impressions. Paid media has evolved into a strategic tool for conversion and consumer insight.
- **Earned Media:** Storytelling must now be data-driven and evidence-based. Journalists demand credible data to contextualize stories. For example, Bayer Foundation's USD 5 million fund to combat malnutrition gained traction because of verified health data.
- **Shared Media:** Africa's young, digital-native audiences expect authentic, visual, and culturally relevant content. Brands must tailor messages to platform dynamics rather than rely on one-size-fits-all communication.
- **Owned Media:** Organizations increasingly use their own platforms for announcements, crisis response, and stakeholder engagement, ensuring transparency and credibility.

Overall, PR has transitioned from media relations to a strategic, data-led discipline deeply intertwined with digital ecosystems and measurable impact.

# ALEX OWITI → Q&A

## *AI as Decision-Support Accelerator*

*LLMs for rapid research & narrative mapping | Drafting customised press materials | When synthetic media risks trust and IP issues*

**Q   How is AI currently being used in your organization or sector to shape PR strategy, media engagement, or audience analysis?**

AI tools like ChatGPT and Gemini are reshaping PR strategy through research, intelligence gathering, and strategic planning. They help us analyze brand perception, investor sentiment, regulatory environments, and policy debates. AI also supports issue mapping and narrative analysis, refining messaging and spokesperson positioning.

In audience analysis, AI enables segmentation by interest, influence, and platform behavior. Importantly, we treat AI as a decision-support tool, not a substitute for human judgment. Strategic counsel and ethical considerations remain human-led.

**Q   Have you witnessed a moment where AI either enhanced or complicated a PR effort?**

AI enhances content strategy by predicting effective formats and generating draft press releases tailored by tone and industry. However, without oversight, AI risks diluting authenticity or introducing jargon. Synthetic mediadeepfakes and manipulated visualspose reputational risks, making original, verifiable content essential.

**Q   How have digital-first platforms changed how African audiences engage with brands or institutions?**

TikTok has become a dominant platform and even a search engine for products and services. TikTok Shops have shortened the consumer journey, enabling instant purchases. Podcasts, meanwhile, provide space for unfiltered, long-form conversations. In Kenya, podcasts like LNN Podcast, The 97s Podcast, and Mic Cheque are reshaping discourse around governance, accountability, and culture.

## *Platforms as Youth-Driven Agenda-Setters*

*TikTok as search & discovery engine | Podcasts for unfiltered discourse | Gen Z Finance Bill protests & Ojwang custody outrage reshape national narratives*

## *Ethics & The Fight for Authentic Representation*

*IP risks from poorly prompted AI | Deepfakes erode trust | Human oversight + original assets as safeguards*

**Q   How are youth-led or grassroots digital movements influencing mainstream PR narratives?**

Youth-led activism has become a powerful force. The Gen Z-led opposition to Kenya's Finance Bill and campaigns demanding justice after police brutality illustrate how digital movements set the agenda. These audiences are no longer passive consumers—they are active participants shaping policy and institutional behavior.

**Q   What challenges do you see in maintaining authenticity and ethical storytelling in an AI-driven environment?**

AI poses risks of intellectual property infringement, synthetic media misuse, and diluted originality. Without oversight, content can become generic or misleading. Our breakthrough has been embedding AI within ethical governance frameworks—using it for research and ideation but ensuring final narratives are human-led, verified, and transparently attributed.

## ALEX OWITI  →  Q&A

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**Q** **How can African PR professionals ensure local stories are represented responsibly on global platforms?**

By prioritizing original content creation, transparent attribution, and cultural authenticity. African professionals must own their narratives, ensuring AI amplifies rather than distorts local voices.

**The Class of 2030**

*Audience fluency + data literacy + ethical judgment | Curiosity, adaptability & continuous learning | From support function to strategic lever*

**Q** **What skills or mindsets will define the next generation of PR professionals in Africa?**

Three pillars:

- **Audience fluency:** Creating content native to platforms like TikTok and podcasts.
- **Data literacy:** Using AI-driven insights and analytics to inform strategy.
- **Ethical judgment:** Balancing speed with integrity in a trust-deficit media environment.

Mentorship-driven learning, multidisciplinary exposure, and programs blending communications with technology and policy will be critical.

**Q** **If you were to imagine the PR industry in Africa in 2030, what would it look like?**

By 2030, PR will be strategic, technologically empowered, and globally influential—yet rooted in local context. AI and analytics will inform real-time engagement, immersive storytelling through AR/VR will thrive, and African voices will shape global narratives. Ethical, human-centered communication will be the hallmark of the profession.

# THOUGHT LEADER

## ANNA CEESAY

GLASSHOUSEPR | 13 YEARS OF TELLING YOUR STORY

# Q&A

## ANNA CEESAY →

**FOUNDER & CEO, FABELLA COMMUNICATIONS |
THE GAMBIA**

Anna Ceesay is the Founder and CEO of Fabella Communications, a strategic communications consultancy based in The Gambia. With over thirteen years of experience in media and communications, Anna is a former BBC journalist and has worked as a Communications Consultant with leading global development organisations including UNDP, UNICEF, and UNFPA.

At the heart of her work is a deep passion for storytelling for social impact, championing authentic African narratives that reflect the continent's complexity, humanity, and potential.

### Ethics, Authenticity & Representation in African Media

*AI temptation erodes fragile trust* | *Western bias still prevalent* | *Our role: reframe, reposition, re-educate*

**Q** **What challenges do you see in maintaining authenticity and ethical storytelling in an AI-driven, algorithmic media environment?**

The temptation to rely on AI is very real. While it is undoubtedly a powerful and useful tool, it also poses a serious risk to audience trust—trust which is already fragile in today's media landscape.

Recently, I came across a newspaper article that had gone to print with the unmistakable line, "*Would you like me to...?*"a phrase commonly generated at the end of AI responses. In that single moment, the credibility of the journalist and the publication was undermined.

Authenticity and ethical storytelling cannot be automated. They come from human judgement, lived experience, empathy, and accountability. A machine can assist, but it cannot replace the responsibility we carry as storytellers. Once audiences sense that authenticity has been compromised, rebuilding trust becomes extremely difficult.

## ANNA CEESAY  →  Q&A

**Q** **How can African PR and media professionals ensure that local stories are represented responsibly and powerfully on global digital platforms?**

Global media organisations particularly those headquartered in the West continue to misrepresent African stories. There is often an inherent bias in how Africa is framed, with narratives that are overly simplistic, negative, or disconnected from lived realities.

As PR and media professionals on the continent, it is our responsibility to challenge this. We do so by doing what we do best: **reframing, repositioning, and re-educating**.

Africa's stories are rich with complexity, beauty, innovation, and resilience. When we tell these stories with confidence, context, and credibility, we shift global perceptions. Responsible representation means refusing to flatten African experiences and instead showcasing the full spectrum of who we are on our own terms.

**Q** **What skills or mindsets will define the next generation of PR and media professionals in Africa?**

The next generation must be grounded in **ethical clarity**, **cultural intelligence**, and **continuous learning**. Mentorship and community will play a critical role in shaping these professionals.

I strongly recommend initiatives such as **The Comms Mentorship Circle by The Comms Avenue**. I served as a mentor in 2025, and it was an incredibly rewarding experience. Platforms like this help young professionals develop confidence, critical thinking, and a sense of responsibility toward the stories they tell.

Ultimately, the future of African PR and media will be defined by professionals who are not only technically skilled, but also deeply intentional about impact, integrity, and representation.
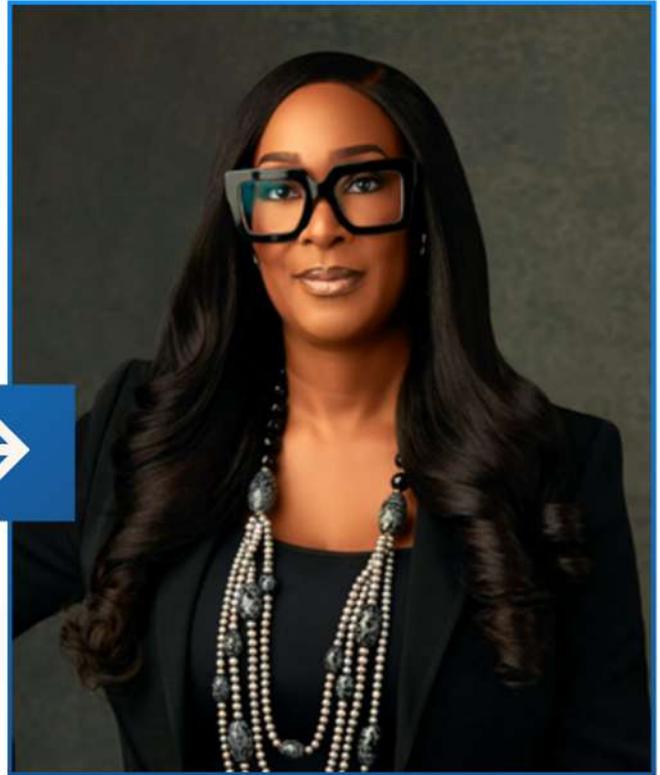
THOUGHT LEADER

## TOKUNBOH GEORGE-TAYLOR

# Q&A

## TOKUNBOH GEORGE-TAYLOR →

### SKOT
### communications

**FOUNDER & CEO, SKOT COMMUNICATIONS,
LAGOS, NIGERIA**

**Decentralisation of Influence**

*Power shifts from institutions to individuals and communities | Social media drives news faster | Hyde Cup celebrates mechanics as brand heroes*

**Q** **What have been the most significant shifts in Africa's PR and media landscape over the past five years?**

From my vantage point, the most significant transformation has been the decentralisation of influence. Power has shifted beyond institutions and traditional media; extending to individuals, communities, niche creators, and culture-driven platforms. Today, relevance is determined by participation and resonance, rather than hierarchy alone.

The second shift is the transformation of the media landscape itself. Social media now drives the spread of news faster, shaping public conversation, and amplifying voices that were previously marginalised. Stories break online first, audiences participate directly in shaping narratives, and PR strategies must adapt to real-time feedback, rapid virality, and the expectation of transparency.

**Q** **A campaign or moment that exemplifies this shift?**

One campaign that captures the transformation in Africa's PR and media landscape is the "Hyde Cup **#MechanicsChampionsLeague**" by Hyde Energy. The 2024 edition, organised in Lagos, Nigeria, featured 16 teams representing 16 distinct community mechanic clusters and spanned a 32-week tournament. Rather than relying on traditional media adverts, Hyde engaged mechanics from 140 mechanic villages, treating them not as a faceless audience but as a community to celebrate, uplift, and involve as brand ambassadors. This shift from mass-market broadcast to community-centred engagement shows how influence has shifted within stakeholders: real people (mechanics) became storytellers and advocates for the brand. By anchoring the campaign around community pride, solidarity, and respect for tradesmen, Hyde leaned into culturally relevant values and forged emotional resonance.

## TOKUNBOH GEORGE-TAYLOR → Q&A

The results speak for themselves: the campaign achieved a 16 million reach, drove a 30% increase in product sales, expanded brand presence across new regions, and significantly boosted brand recognition among key target audiences. Recognizing mechanics as "heroes" gave the brand social legitimacy and authenticity, demonstrating that PR in Africa is evolving: from hierarchical, top-down messaging to storytelling that connects to identity, dignity, and communal values. The Hyde Cup shows that campaigns rooted in culture and community can outperform traditional advertising in impact and resonance.

### AI as Workflow Enhancer

*Meltwater for real-time social listening and sentiment analysis | Beverage company AI visuals lacked emotional warmth | AI best as complement to human oversight*

**Q**   **How is AI being used at SKOT and across the sector?**

At SKOT Communications, our AI adoption has been gradual and has been a useful tool to our PR strategy, enhancing critical stages of our workflow and business analysis. A key focus is social listening and sentiment analysis. Using AI-powered tools like Meltwater, we monitor conversations in real time, decode audience mood, identify emerging trends, and capture cultural nuances across multiple channels. This allows us to segment audiences more precisely, understand what matters to them, and tailor campaigns that resonate authentically.

By grounding our campaigns in actual audience sentiment rather than assumptions, we are able to anticipate reactions, respond proactively to challenges, and uncover opportunities for storytelling that drives engagement. In essence, AI transforms raw data into actionable insights, turning social listening into a strategic advantage for PR.

**Q**   **A moment when AI enhanced or complicated efforts?**

It's not something I have personally experienced, but I have witnessed a moment where AI both enhanced and complicated a PR/media effort. A renowned beverage company recently experimented with AI-generated content for its holiday advertising campaigns.

The AI allowed the marketing and PR teams to produce visuals quickly and test creative ideas, significantly reducing production time and costs.

However, when the campaign launched, audiences noted that the visuals felt artificial and lacked the emotional warmth the brand is known for. Social media discussions and media coverage highlighted that, while technically impressive, the content didn't resonate in the same way as previous human-crafted campaigns.

For the PR team, this became both a learning opportunity and a cautionary tale. AI clearly enhances efficiency and scale, but it cannot fully replace human oversight in maintaining brand voice, emotional connection, and audience trust.
The company addressed this by combining AI-generated content with human-curated messaging, ensuring authenticity in future campaigns. This example underscores an important lesson for PR professionals: AI is a powerful tool, but it works best as a complement to human insight, particularly in social listening, sentiment analysis, and crafting messages that truly connect with audiences.

## TOKUNBOH GEORGE-TAYLOR → Q&A

### Digital-First as Cultural Conversation

*Podcasts explore social, economic, political issues | TikTok creators achieve global recognition | Youth podcasting and Lagos Fashion Week as narrative co-creators*

**Q**   **How have digital-first platforms changed audience engagement?**

There has been a significant rise in podcasts across Africa, which now serve not only as entertainment but as platforms that explore social, economic, and political issues, offering brands a meaningful avenue for engagement. Podcasts like **Tea with Tays** blend lifestyle and culture with brand partnerships, such as Lipton, reaching audiences interested in everyday trends. Mentality with Ebuka dives into Masculinity through the lens of personal growth, career insights, and societal conversations around the male gender. **Off Air with Gbemi and Toolz** combines celebrity interviews with social commentary, creating space for discussions on culture, lifestyle, and contemporary issues. Meanwhile, ISWIS provides in-depth analysis of lifestyle topics, allowing brands to integrate messaging into content that informs and resonates with engaged, socially conscious listeners.

On TikTok, influencer partnerships have become a key channel for brand engagement. Nigerian creators are now achieving global recognition, where a Nigerian creator recently won Sub-Saharan Africa Content Creator of the Year, demonstrating how these digital platforms have now become recognised globally because of the influence across the continent.

These digital-first strategies show that brands now succeed by participating authentically in cultural conversations, leveraging trusted voices, and engaging audiences in platforms where they actively create and share meaning.

**Q**   **Youth-led or grassroots movements influencing mainstream narratives?**

A clear example for me is the rise of youth-led podcasting in Nigeria as a co-creator of media and PR narratives. Podcasts such as I Said What I Said, Tea With Tay, Off Air with Gbemi & Toolz, and The Honest Bunch don't just attract audiences; they actively shape how conversations are structured, what topics are considered culturally relevant, and how brands approach storytelling. These platforms created spaces where everyday experiences, opinions, and humour became content, pushing media houses and PR teams to design strategies that feel conversational, personality-led, and rooted in real community dialogue rather than top-down messaging.

Another strong example is how young creators across Nigeria and West Africa function as real-time co-producers of culture, news, and brand narratives on TikTok. Through short-form videos centred on lifestyle, beauty, humour, work, and identity, creators generate cultural moments that media platforms often pick up, contextualise, and amplify. In this ecosystem, PR strategies increasingly begin on TikTok, with creators setting the tone and language before brands and media step in to participate.

The visibility of the West African fashion ecosystem, particularly around Lagos Fashion Week, further illustrates this shift. Digital creators, designers, stylists, and photographers collectively shape the event's narrative by documenting runway moments, street style, craftsmanship, and behind-the-scenes processes across social platforms. In PR terms, this decentralised storytelling has positioned Lagos Fashion Week as more than a calendar event; it is framed as a cultural moment sustained by continuous digital engagement. The global attention the event receives is therefore not driven solely by traditional fashion media, but by a network of youth-led storytellers who act as co-authors of its brand identity and international perception.

## TOKUNBOH GEORGE-TAYLOR → Q&A

### Ethics & Narrative Ownership

*AI lacks context-awareness without oversight | Oversimplification and bias risks | Local shaping for global resonance*

**Q**      **Biggest challenges to authenticity in an AI-driven environment?**

This is not something I have experienced personally, but from a public relations and communications perspective, a key challenge in an AI-driven, algorithmic media environment is balancing speed, scale, and efficiency with ethical judgment, accuracy, and cultural authenticity. While AI tools can support content generation, audience segmentation, and trend analysis, they are not inherently context-aware. Without careful oversight, AI-generated outputs can oversimplify complex narratives, misrepresent cultural realities, or reinforce existing biases embedded in data.

This makes rigorous fact-checking and human editorial review essential. AI should be treated as a support system rather than a source of truth, particularly when storytelling involves diverse audiences and sensitive cultural contexts. In PR, credibility is built on trust, and trust depends on accuracy, nuance, and responsible representation, elements that cannot be fully automated. The key breakthrough in navigating this landscape lies in recognising that AI is a means, not the end of the storytelling process.

**Q**      **How can African professionals ensure responsible global representation?**

Ensuring powerful global representation requires narrative ownership and localisation. Stories are most impactful when shaped by those who understand the cultural context and lived experience behind them. In Africa's creative industries, Afrobeats and Lagos Fashion Week show how locally driven digital storytelling can define global trends, with international media responding to momentum set locally.

In the corporate space, organisations like Aradel, Dorman Long, Netflix Nigeria, use culturally informed PR to highlight innovation, expertise, and impact, ensuring global audiences understand African realities. Missed opportunities arise when African narratives are adopted superficially, generating attention without credibility. The takeaway is clear: authenticity and cultural ownership are essential. When done well, local stories resonate globally while remaining true to their roots.

### The Class of 2030

*Strategic intelligence + cultural fluency + digital dexterity + ethical judgment | SKOT Impact Academy for real-time skill-building | Bold, dynamic, unapologetically African industry*

**Q**      **What skills and mindsets will define the next generation?**

The next generation of PR and media professionals in Africa will need more than technical competence; they will need strategic intelligence, cultural fluency, digital dexterity, and ethical judgment, all grounded in creativity, resilience, and courage. African communicators operate in a complex environment: audiences are diverse, digital trends move fast, and global attention often misses local nuance. Thriving here requires not just knowledge, but the ability to show up, position yourself, and shape narratives with purpose.

## TOKUNBOH GEORGE-TAYLOR → Q&A

For example, personal branding is beyond LinkedIn profiles, it's how you consistently show up across platforms, the voice you project, and the stories you choose to amplify. Data fluency means using insights to understand audiences and anticipate trends, not just report metrics. Digital dexterity goes beyond knowing tools—it's about creating culturally relevant campaigns on Instagram, TikTok, or YouTube that engage real communities, not just ticking boxes. Ethical judgment ensures that every story told respects context, avoids bias, and strengthens trust.

Programs like SKOT Impact Academy are built to cultivate these skills in practice. Participants don't just learn concepts, they test strategies, create campaigns, and refine ideas in real-time under the mentorship of leaders who have successfully bridged local and global PR. The result is communicators who can respond to today's trends while strategically shaping the narratives and standards of African PR for tomorrow. For young professionals looking to thrive, such programs offer a bridge between emerging talent and the high-level expertise required to lead, innovate, and influence in a dynamic, culturally rich market.

**Q** **Your 2030 vision for African PR and media?**
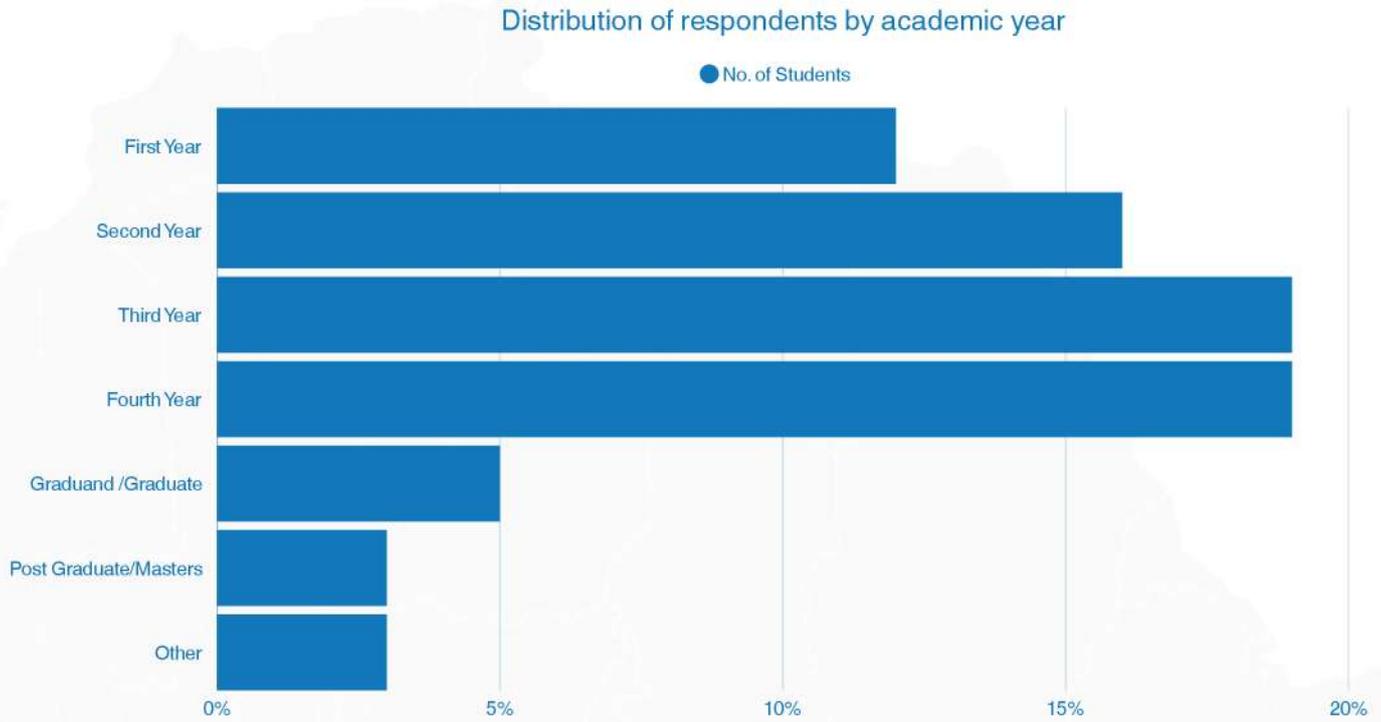
By 2030, I imagine Africa's PR and media industry as bold, dynamic, and unapologetically African.

- Decentralised influence: Influence will no longer be determined by office location, agency size, or budget. A single creator, a small agency, or a brand with a compelling story can shape conversations and set cultural trends. The power of ideas and authenticity will outweigh traditional hierarchies, allowing local voices to reach global audiences directly.
- Blended roles: The lines between PR, content, community management, and brand strategy will become more intertwined as Professionals will be expected to think holistically—crafting narratives, managing engagement, and designing campaigns that are seamless across digital and offline touchpoints.
- Social-first, media-second: Stories will break on digital platforms like Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and emerging African-built social networks before they reach traditional media. PR will become more about listening, anticipating, and responding in real-time, turning social spaces into the frontline of reputation management, audience engagement, and trendsetting.
- Impact-driven measurement: Success metrics will evolve beyond impressions, reach, or follower counts. The focus will shift to trust, audience engagement, behaviour change, and tangible business or social impact. Data will be used strategically to understand communities and refine campaigns, ensuring storytelling drives meaningful outcomes rather than vanity metrics.
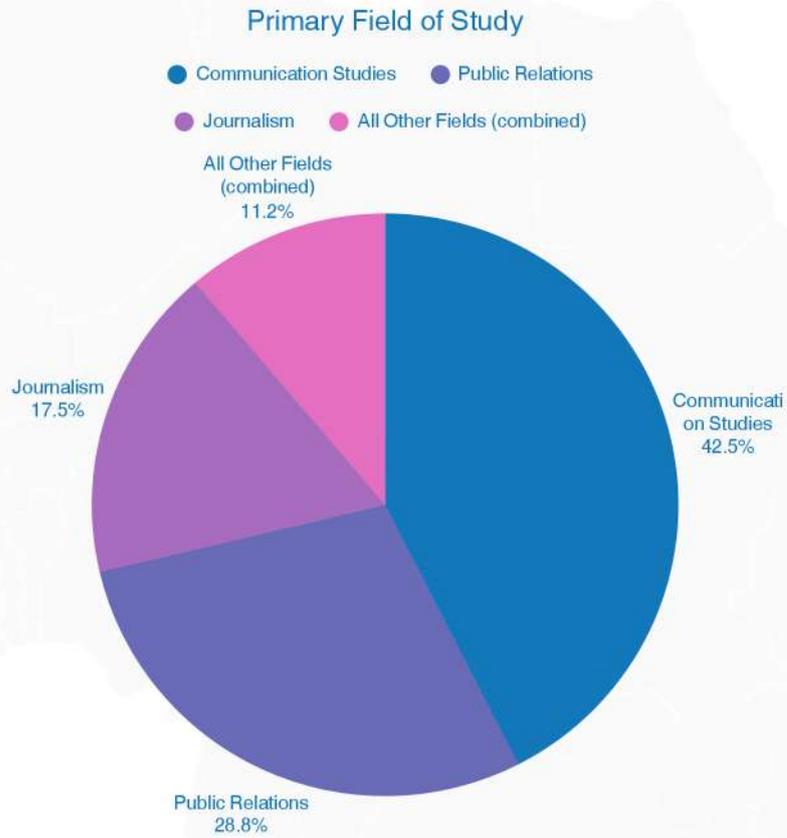
# UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

GLASSHOUSEPR

**13** YEARS OF TELLING YOUR STORY

## Distribution of Respondents by Academic Year

### Distribution of respondents by academic year

● No. of Students



Bar chart showing distribution of respondents by academic year:
- First Year: ~12%
- Second Year: ~16%
- Third Year: ~19%
- Fourth Year: ~19%
- Graduand /Graduate: ~5%
- Post Graduate/Masters: ~3%
- Other: ~3%

X-axis: 0%, 5%, 10%, 15%, 20%

### Key Findings

Third Year and Fourth Year students represent the largest groups, each accounting for 19 respondents (24.7% each), collectively forming nearly half (49.4%) of the total sample. Second Year students follow with 16 respondents (20.8%). First Year students constitute 12 respondents (15.6%). Graduands and graduates together make up 5 respondents (6.5%). Postgraduate/Masters students (including those explicitly in their 2nd year of a Masters programme) total 3 respondents (3.9%). Staff members (lecturers, faculty, and the Communications & Marketing Manager) also number 3 respondents (3.9%).

## Primary Field of Study

### Primary Field of Study

- ● Communication Studies
- ● Public Relations
- ● Journalism
- ● All Other Fields (combined)

All Other Fields (combined) 11.2%

Journalism 17.5%

Communication Studies 42.5%

Public Relations 28.8%
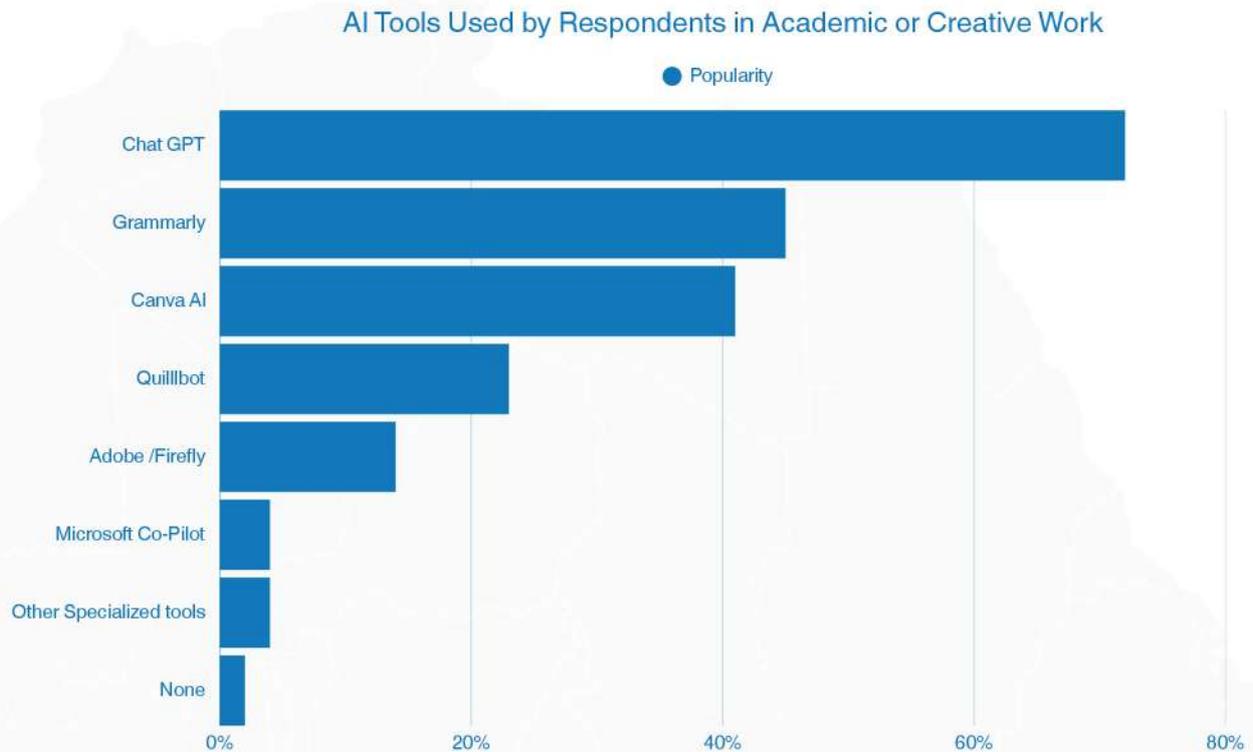
## Key Findings

The vast majority of respondents (88.8%) are enrolled in communication-related disciplines. Communication Studies is by far the most represented field (42.5%), followed by Public Relations (28.8%; ) and Journalism (17.5%).

## AI Tools Used in Academic or Creative Work

### AI Tools Used by Respondents in Academic or Creative Work

● Popularity



## Key Findings

**AI Tools Used by Respondents in Academic or Creative Work:** An overwhelming 97.5% of respondents report using at least one AI tool in their academic or creative work. Only 2 respondents (2.5%) stated they do not use any AI tools.

- **ChatGPT** is by far the most widely adopted tool, used by 90% of respondents making it nearly ubiquitous in this sample.
- More than half of respondents also regularly use **Grammarly** (56.3%) and Canva AI (51.3%), indicating strong adoption of AI for writing enhancement and visual/creative design tasks.
- **Quillbot** (paraphrasing & writing aid) is the fourth most popular tool (28.8%), followed by Adobe Firefly/generative image tools (17.5%).
- A long tail of specialized tools (**Midjourney, Grok, Perplexity, Gemini, Sora**, etc.) exists, but each is used by only 1–4 respondents.

The data clearly demonstrates that AI tools particularly **ChatGPT, Grammarly,** and **Canva AI** have become deeply integrated into the academic and creative workflows of this student population.

## Familiarity With the Application of AI in Public Relations

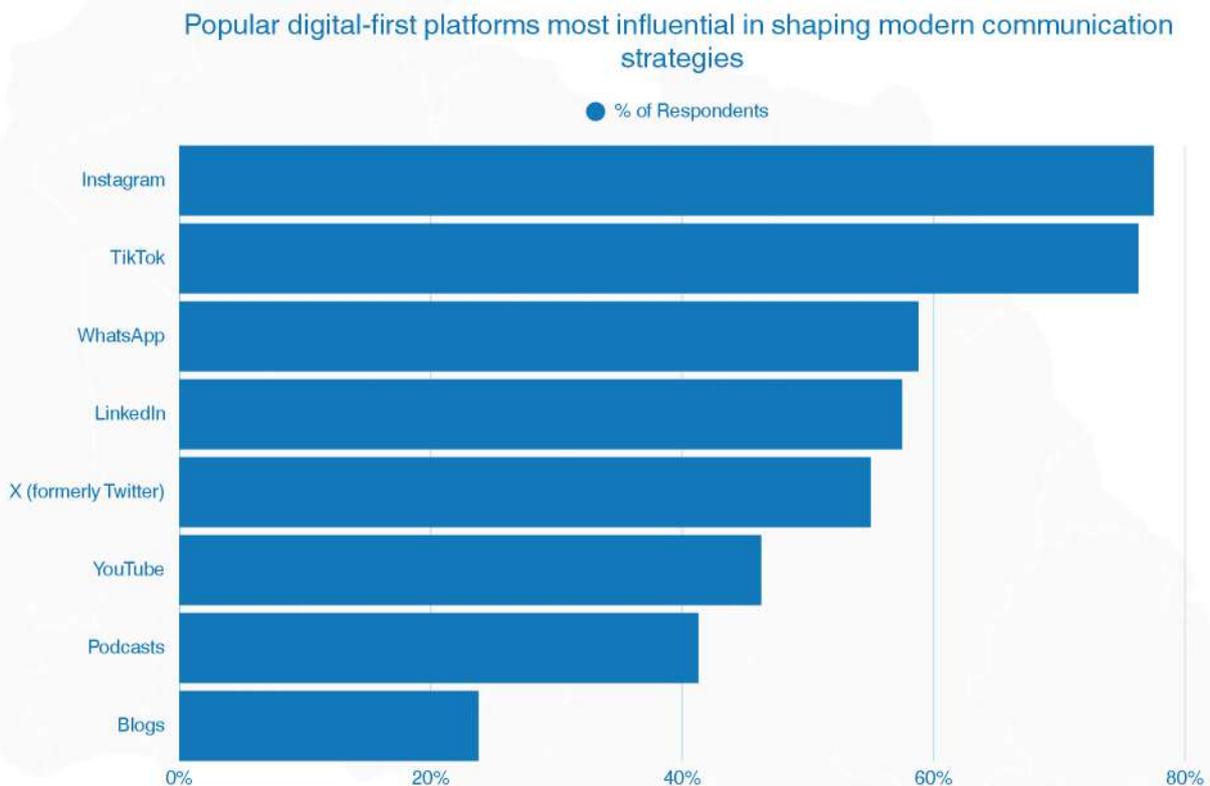### Self-Reported Familiarity with AI Applications in Public Relations

● Percentage
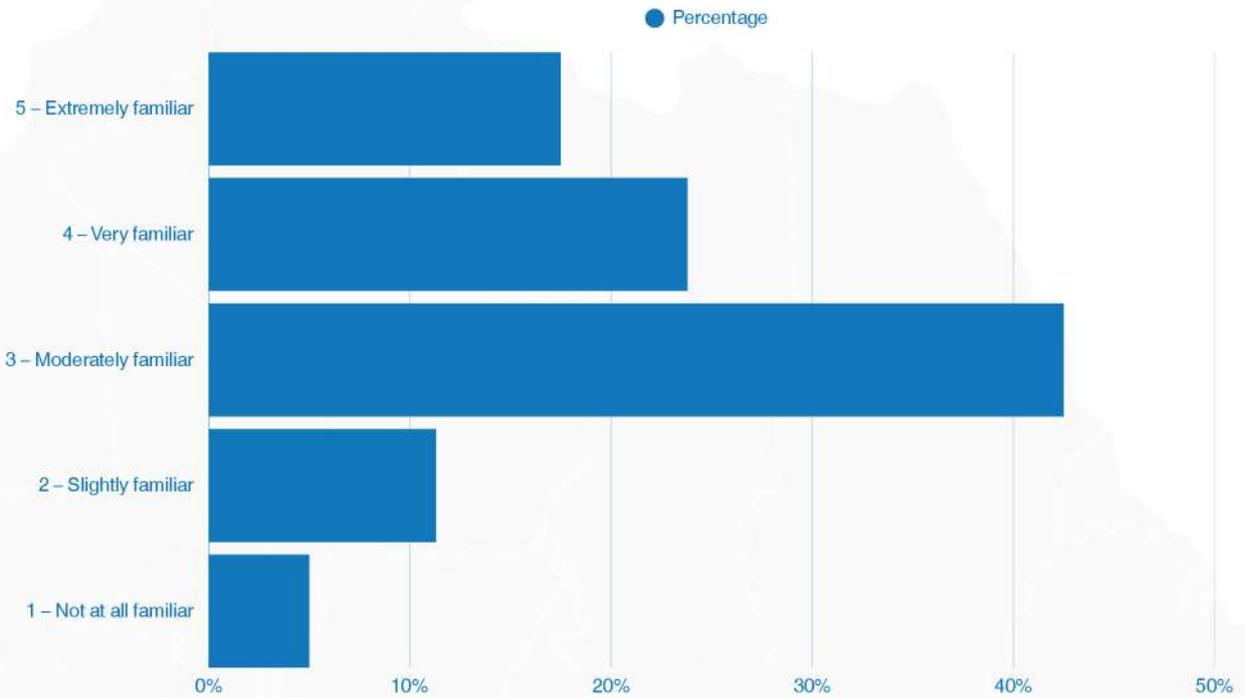


## Key Findings

Self-Reported Familiarity with AI Applications in Public Relations

- The largest group of respondents (42.5%) describe themselves as moderately familiar with how AI is applied in public relations.
- A substantial 41.3% report being very or extremely familiar (Levels 4 + 5 combined), indicating that over four in ten respondents feel confident or highly confident in this area.
- Only 16.3% report low familiarity (Levels 1 + 2), with just 5% stating they are not at all familiar.
- The distribution is slightly left-skewed toward higher familiarity: the combined "very/extremely familiar" group (41.3%) significantly outnumbers the "slightly/not at all familiar" group (16.3%).

Overall, respondents demonstrate moderate to high awareness of AI in public relations, with very few claiming complete unfamiliarity.

## Popular Digital-First Platforms Most Influential in Shaping Modern Communication Strategies
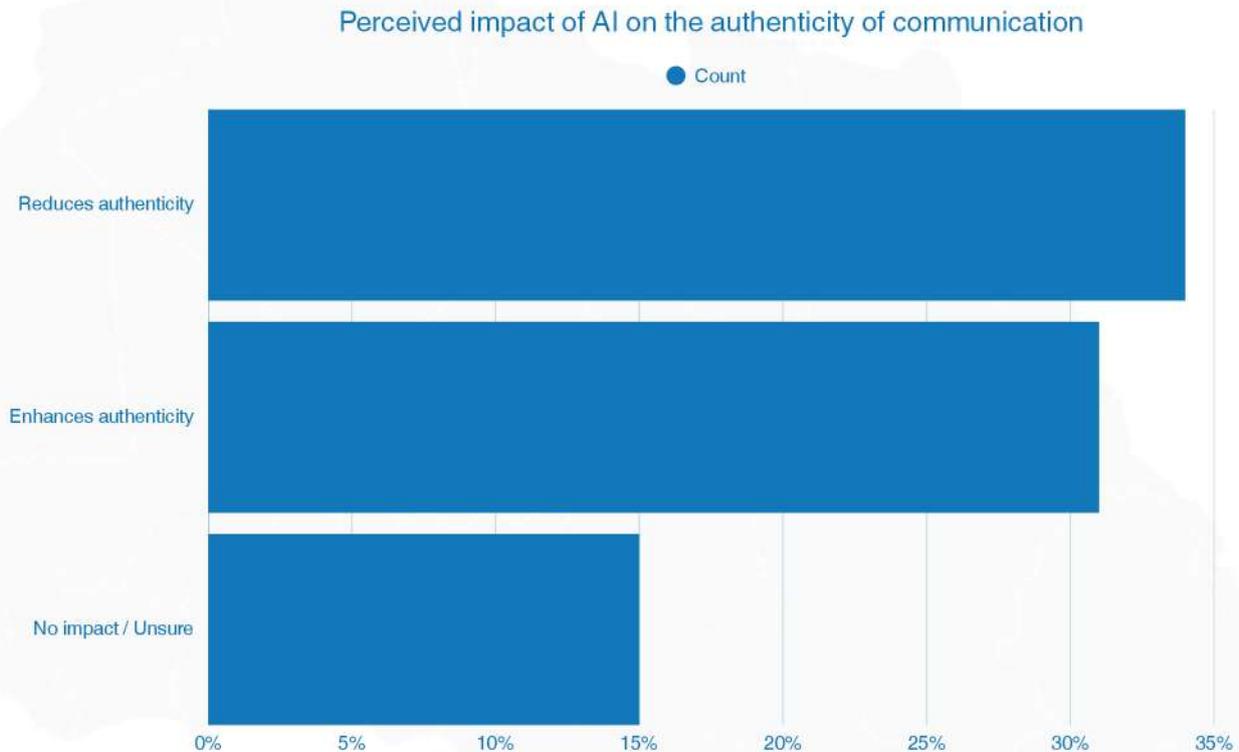
### Popular digital-first platforms most influential in shaping modern communication strategies

● % of Respondents

| Platform | |
|---|---|
| Instagram | |
| TikTok | |
| WhatsApp | |
| LinkedIn | |
| X (formerly Twitter) | |
| YouTube | |
| Podcasts | |
| Blogs | |

(0% — 20% — 40% — 60% — 80%)

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### Key Findings

Digital-First Platforms Considered Most Influential in Shaping Modern Communication Strategies Instagram (77.5%) and TikTok (76.3%) stand out as the clear top two platforms, selected by more than three-quarters of respondents. This confirms the overwhelming dominance of short-form, visual-first social platforms among this group.

- WhatsApp (58.8%) and LinkedIn (57.5%) form a strong second tier widely seen as essential tools for direct messaging and professional networking respectively.
- X (formerly Twitter) (55.0%) remains highly relevant, selected by more than half of respondents despite recent changes.
- YouTube (46.3%) and Podcasts (41.3%) are viewed as influential by a sizeable minority, underlining the continued importance of long-form video and audio content.
- Traditional Blogs trail significantly (23.8%), selected less than one-third as often as Instagram or TikTok.

The responses paint a picture of a highly visual, mobile-first, and real-time communication landscape, with Instagram and TikTok now perceived as the most powerful forces shaping modern strategies.

## How Does The Use of AI Affect The Authenticity of Communication

### Perceived impact of AI on the authenticity of communication

● Count

| Category | |
|---|---|
| Reduces authenticity | |
| Enhances authenticity | |
| No impact / Unsure | |

0%    5%    10%    15%    20%    25%    30%    35%

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### Key Findings

Perceived Impact of AI on the Authenticity of Communication

- Respondents are clearly divided on whether AI helps or harms authenticity:
  - 42.5% believe AI reduces authenticity.
  - 38.8% believe AI enhances authenticity.
  - 18.8% remain neutral (either see no impact or are unsure).

- The difference between the two main opposing views is small (only 3 percentage points), indicating no strong consensus the sample is almost evenly split.

- Fewer than 1 in 5 respondents adopt a neutral or uncertain stance.

This polarisation reflects an ongoing debate among communication students and professionals: while many fear AI-generated content undermines genuine human expression, a nearly equal number see AI as a tool that can improve clarity, inclusivity, and reach thereby enhancing perceived authenticity when used transparently and ethically.

## Open-Ended Responses on AI's Effect on Authenticity

| Theme / Use Case | Sentiments | Theme / Use Case |
|---|---|---|
| Depends on how it is used / It's a neutral tool | 28.6% | "AI itself is neutral… authenticity depends on the human using it" |
| Reduces authenticity (loses human touch, originality, emotion) | 27.0% | "Lacks the human aspect… no emotions", "Content looks similar, storytelling is dying" |
| Enhances authenticity (helps express true self better, clearer, fact-checks) | 22.2% | "Helps people express their true thoughts more clearly", "Fact-checking increases credibility" |
| Risk of misinformation / deepfakes / lack of verification | 17.5% | "Spread of misinformation", "Can recreate untrue info to look true" |
| Over-reliance / copy-paste without personal input | 14.3% | "People just copy-paste", "We use AI to think for us" |
| Enhances efficiency & tailoring (but not necessarily authenticity) | 12.7% | "Tailors messages, saves time", "Defines target audience & tone" |
| Reduces creativity / originality | 11.1% | "Limits creative thinking", "Originality is trimmed" |
| Should be used only to support, not replace human work | 11.1% | "AI should complement, not replace the human brain" |
| Not sure / no strong opinion | 4.8% | "I'm not sure", "I has no impact since I don't use it" |

## Summary

When asked about AI's impact on the authenticity of communication, respondents were nearly evenly split: 42.5% believe AI reduces authenticity, 38.8% believe it enhances authenticity, and 18.8% see no impact or remain unsure. However, the optional open-ended explanations (provided by 63 respondents) reveal far greater nuance than the closed question allowed. The single most common view (expressed by over 28% of those who elaborated) is that AI itself is neutral its effect on authenticity depends entirely on how responsibly and transparently it is used.

While some continue to fear a loss of human emotion, originality, and creativity, an equally sizeable group argues that AI can enhance authenticity by improving clarity, breaking language barriers, enabling fact-checking, and helping individuals express their true intentions more effectively. Misinformation and the risk of over-reliance on "copy-paste" AI outputs emerged as shared concerns across both camps. Ultimately, the strongest consensus to emerge from the qualitative responses is that AI should function as a supportive tool rather than a replacement for human judgment, voice, and empathy a position that transcends the simple "enhances vs. reduces" divide.

## Inclusion of AI Tools in University Course Work

Inclusion of AI tools training in University Course work

● Yes   ● No



No
38.8%

Yes
61.3%
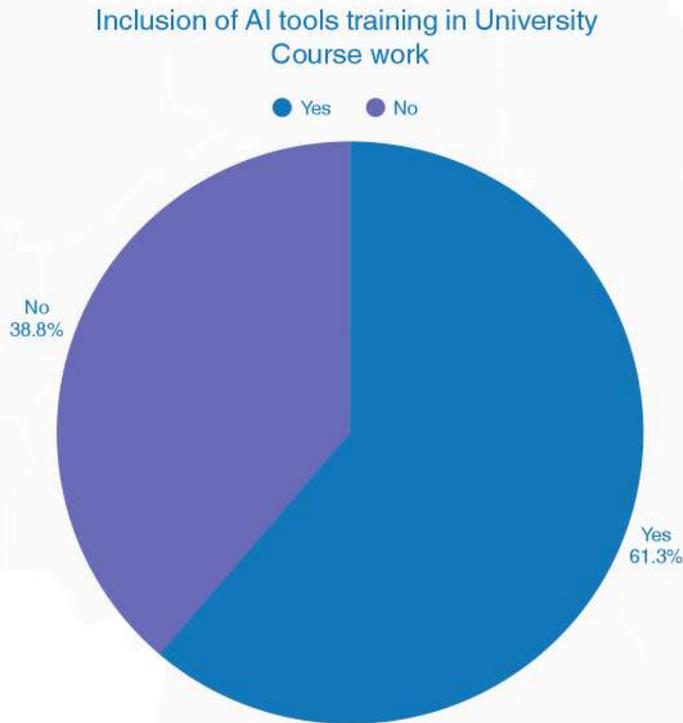
### Key Findings

A clear majority of respondents (61.3%) report that their university coursework has already included training on AI tools relevant to communication, public relations, or digital storytelling, while 38.8% say it has not. This indicates that AI literacy is increasingly being integrated into the curriculum within this academic community, although a significant minority (nearly four in ten students) have yet to receive formal exposure through their courses

## Confidence in Responsible and Ethical Use of AI Tools in Future PR/Communications Roles

Confidence in Responsible and Ethical Use of AI Tools in Future PR/Communications Roles

● Count
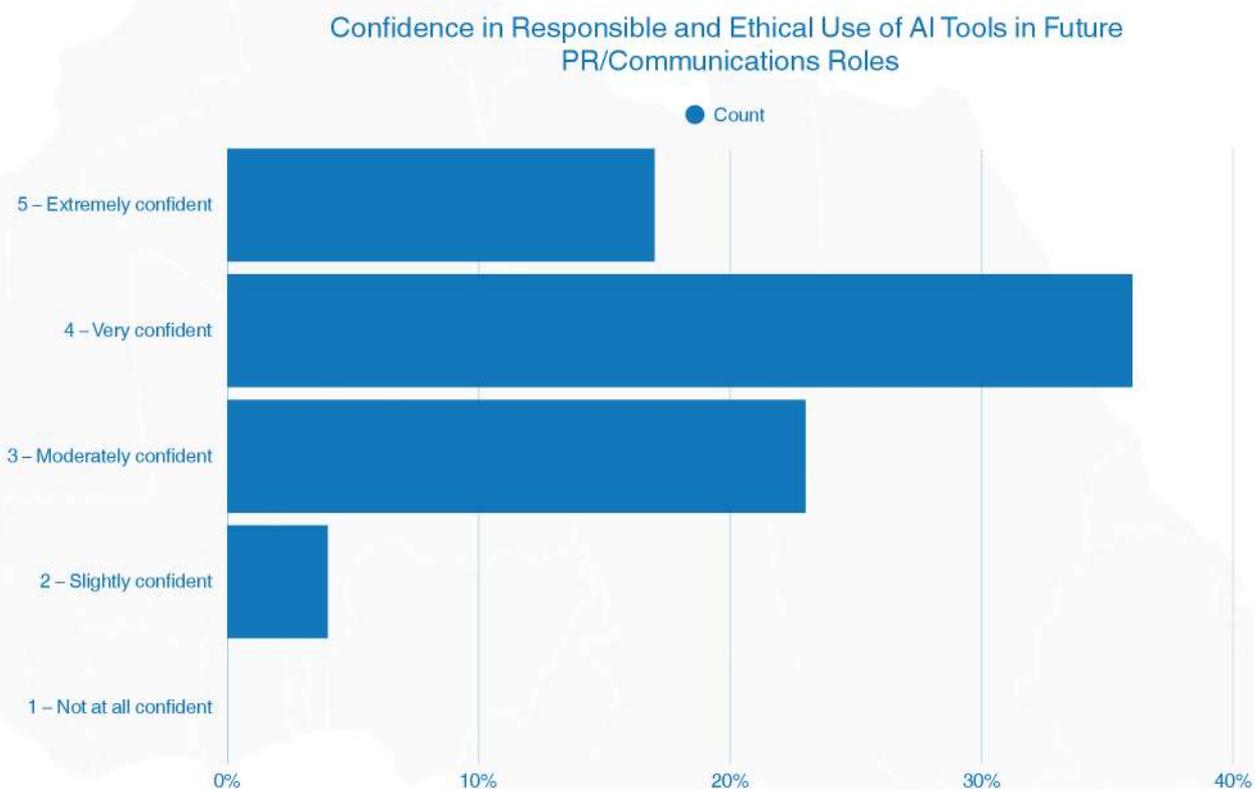


## Key Findings

Respondents express notably high confidence in their ability to use AI responsibly and ethically in professional settings: two-thirds (66.3%) rate themselves as very or extremely confident (4 or 5 on the 5-point scale), with 45% selecting "very confident" as the single most common response. Almost three in ten (28.8%) are moderately confident, while only 5% feel slightly confident and no one reports being not at all confident. The overall mean of 3.88 reflects a strongly positive outlook, suggesting that this cohort of communication students feels well-prepared to navigate the ethical challenges of AI in future PR and communication roles.

## Practical Experience Creating Digital/PR Content with AI Support

Practical Experience Creating Digital/PR
Content with AI Support

● Yes   ● No

No
36.3%

Yes
63.8%
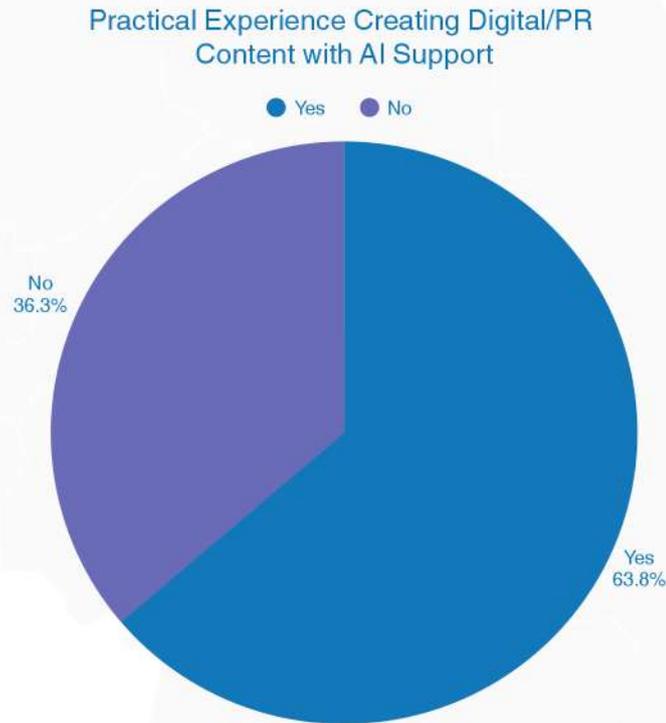
### Key Findings

Nearly two-thirds of respondents (63.8%) have already used AI to create real communication or PR content such as social media posts, press releases, or campaign ideas, while just over one-third (36.3%) have not yet done so. This high adoption rate among students demonstrates that hands-on use of AI in content creation is no longer experimental it has become a common practice even at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels.
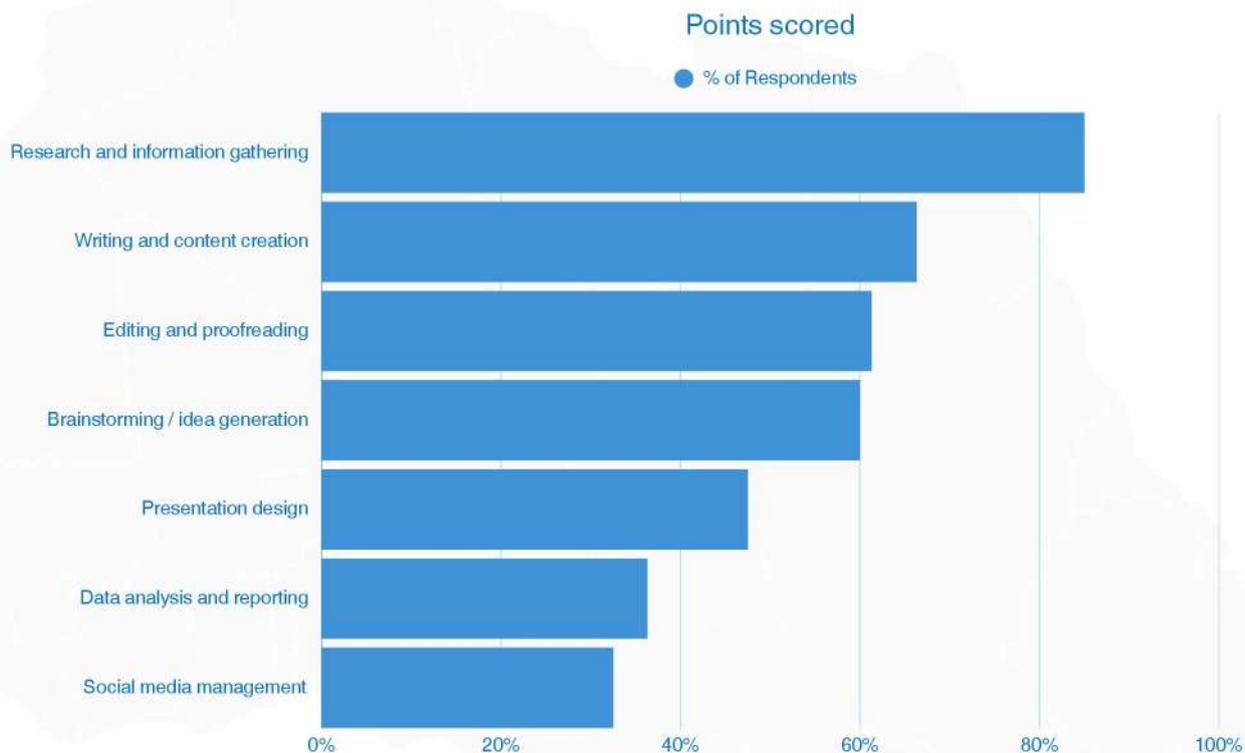
## Open-Ended Responses on AI's Effect on Authenticity

| Theme / Use Case | % of Yes-respondents | Sentiments |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Brainstorming & generating initial ideas/captions** | 49% | "Generate initial idea", "brainstorming content", "campaign concepts" |
| **Drafting or refining press releases** | 33% | "Press release for ICGLR conference", "crisis press release", "reframing press releases" |
| **Social media posts, captions, and scheduling** | 31% | "Compelling captions", "Instagram & LinkedIn posts", "trending stories" |
| **Grammar, editing, rephrasing, clarity & tone** | 29% | "Perfect grammar", "Grammarly rephrasing", "sharpening headline" |
| **Image/graphics/poster creation (Canva AI, Midjourney)** | 24% | "Posters using AI", "Midjourney for storyboards", "Canva AI" |
| **Campaign strategy & planning** | 20% | "Advertising campaign ideas for juice launch", "communication strategies" |
| **Time-saving / tight deadlines** | 18% | "Urgent submission", "quick results under tight deadlines" |
| **Audience analysis, sentiment, trends & monitoring** | 12% | "Audience sentiments during crisis", "track outreach" |
| **Video scripts, storyboards, voice-overs** | 10% | "Scripts for promotional videos", "storyboards with Midjourney" |
| **Translation & multilingual content** | 6% | "Translate Japanese posts to English" |
| **Learning / personal skill development** | 6% | "Taught me Spanish", "learning graphic design mockups" |

## Summary

Among the Yes respondents who have already created digital or PR content with AI support, the tool is overwhelmingly used as a versatile creative assistant rather than a full replacement. The most common applications are **brainstorming and generating initial ideas or captions (49%), drafting or polishing press releases (33%), and crafting social media posts and captions (31%). Grammar, editing, and tone refinement (often via Grammarly or ChatGPT) are also widespread (29%), as is the use of AI-powered design tools such as Canva AI and Midjourney for images and posters (24%).** Many explicitly highlight time-saving under tight deadlines and the ability to refine and personalise AI output rather than publishing it raw. Overall, students describe a sophisticated, human-in-the-loop workflow: AI accelerates ideation, research, drafting, and visual creation, but the final strategic direction, cultural nuance, and authenticity remain firmly under human control.

## AI and Its Use Cases for Students

### Points scored

● % of Respondents



(Horizontal bar chart, % of Respondents:)

- Research and information gathering: ~85%
- Writing and content creation: ~66%
- Editing and proofreading: ~61%
- Brainstorming / idea generation: ~60%
- Presentation design: ~47%
- Data analysis and reporting: ~36%
- Social media management: ~33%

(X-axis: 0%, 20%, 40%, 60%, 80%, 100%)

## Key Findings

AI has become deeply embedded in nearly every stage of PR studies among this cohort. An overwhelming 85% use AI for research and information gathering, making it by far the most common application. Strong majorities also rely on AI for writing and content creation (66.3%), editing and proofreading (61.3%), and brainstorming/idea generation (60.0%), confirming that generative AI (ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, etc.) is now a core academic tool. Almost half (47.5%) use AI-powered design features for presentation design (Canva Magic Studio, PowerPoint Copilot, Gamma, etc.), while data analysis & reporting (36.3%) and social media management (32.5%) are the least frequently mentioned yet still used by one-third or more of the students. In short, AI is no longer an optional extra; it is a standard, multi-purpose toolkit across the entire PR learning workflow.

## AI and Its Use Cases for Students

### Areas of PR Studies Recommended for AI Integration

● Times Selected
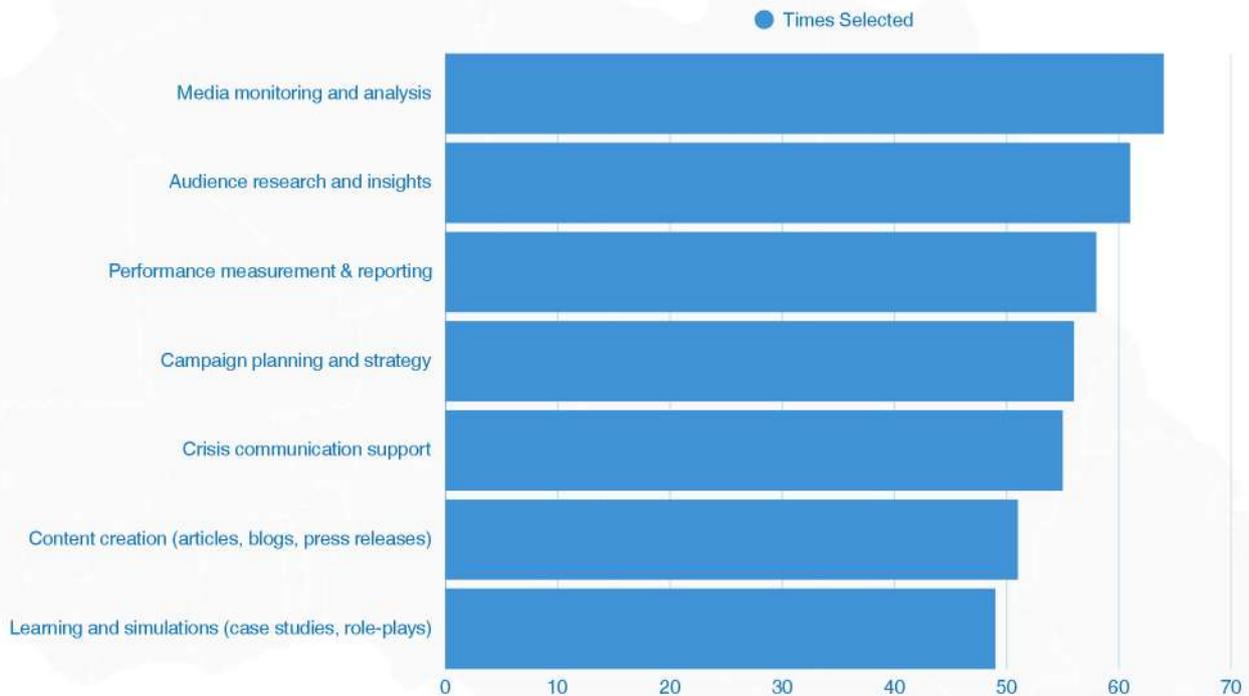


## Key Findings

Students overwhelmingly support the integration of AI across virtually the entire PR curriculum. The top three recommended areas media monitoring & analysis (80%), audience research & insights (76.3%), and performance measurement & reporting (72.5%) are data-heavy functions where AI can deliver real-time, actionable intelligence at scale. Close behind are campaign planning & strategy (70%) and crisis communication support (68.8%), reflecting strong belief that AI can enhance speed and precision in high-stakes, time-sensitive scenarios. Even traditionally creative tasks like content creation (63.8%) and learning & simulations (61.3%) are seen by clear majorities as suitable for AI augmentation. Notably, every single option was selected by at least 61% of respondents, indicating a broad consensus that AI belongs in all major pillars of modern PR education.

## Student Perceptions of Lecturers' Use of AI in Teaching

### Student Perceptions of Lecturers' Use of AI in Teaching

● Yes      ● Maybe / Not sure      ● No



No
17.5%

Yes
30%

Maybe / Not sure
52.5%
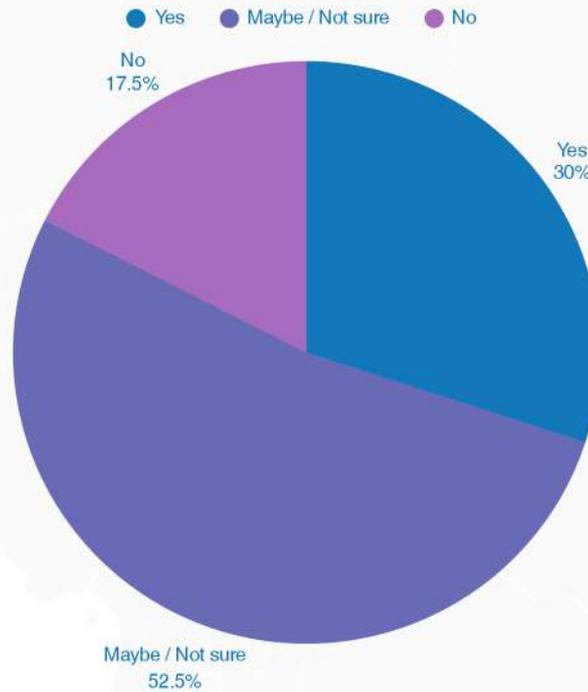
## Key Findings

More than half of the students (52.5%) are unsure whether their lecturers currently use AI in teaching, making "Maybe" the single most common answer. Only 30% believe their lecturers do use AI (e.g., for generating examples, lecture notes, quizzes, or presentation design), while 17.5% believe they do not. Several open comments clarify the picture: a few lecturers openly integrate AI (e.g., "Lecture notes Yes"), while others still view it primarily as a cheating/plagiarism risk. Overall, the data suggest that explicit, visible adoption of AI by faculty remains limited and uneven most students either don't see it or cannot tell.

## Areas Students Want to Be Taught About AI in PR at University Level

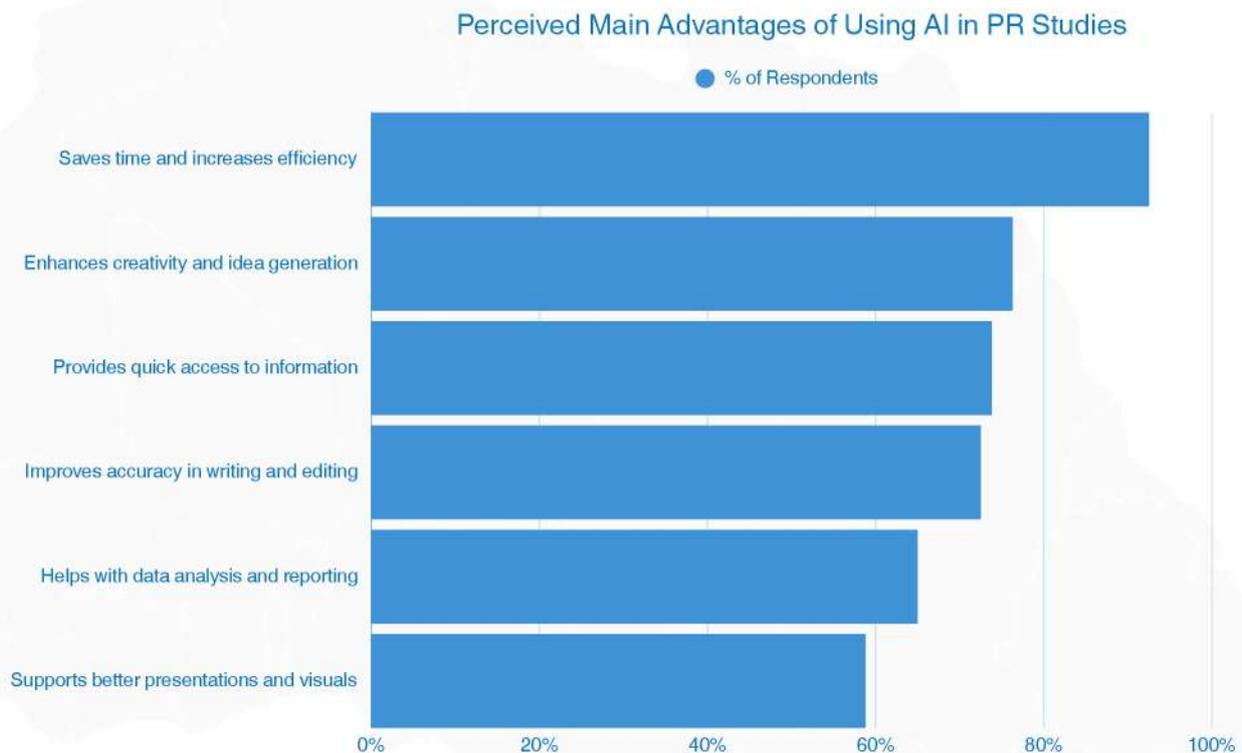### Areas Students Want to Be Taught About AI in PR at University Level

● % of Respondents

| Area | % |
|---|---|
| Media monitoring & sentiment analysis | |
| AI in crisis communication management | |
| Campaign planning with AI support | |
| Social media analytics and content creation | |
| PR writing and editing with AI tools | |
| Data-driven decision making in PR | |
| Ethical use of AI in communication | |

0%    20%    40%    60%    80%
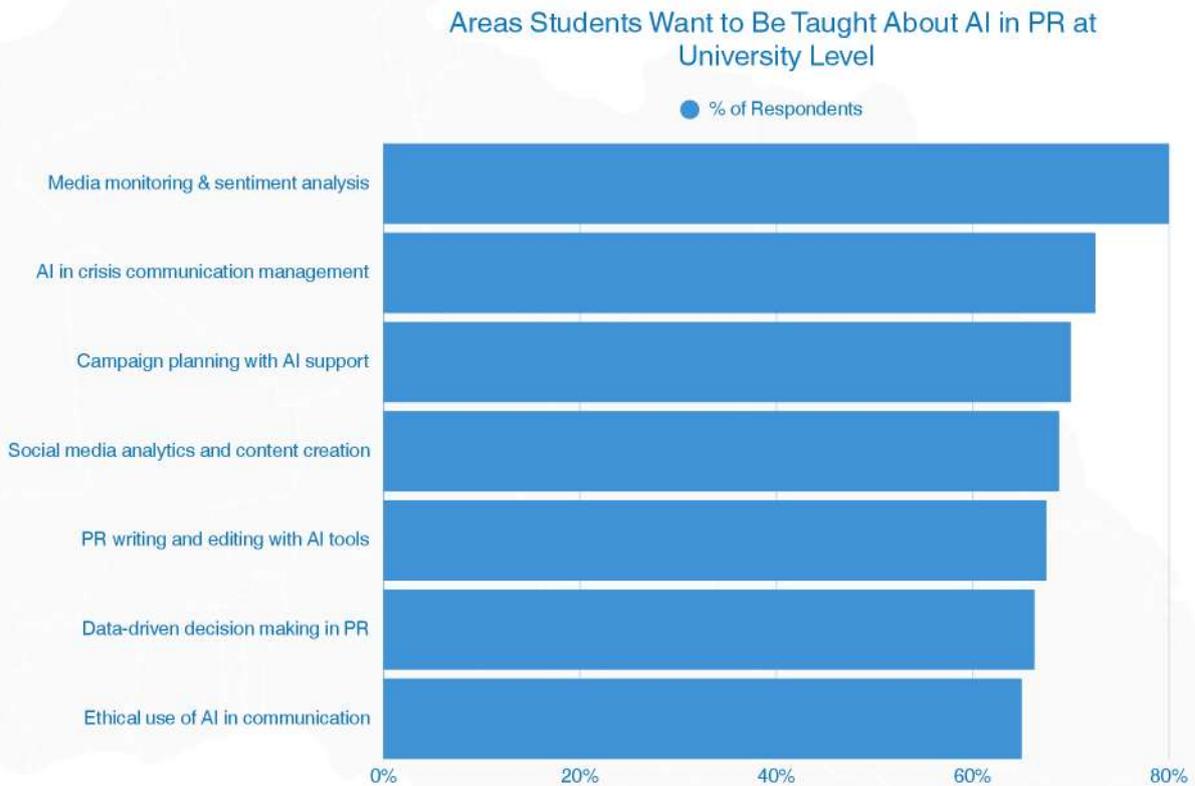
## Key Findings

Students exhibit an exceptionally strong and broad appetite for formal AI education in PR. The top priority by a clear margin is media monitoring & sentiment analysis (80%), followed closely by AI in crisis communication management (72.5%) and campaign planning with AI support (70%) confirming that students want to master the high-speed, high-stakes, data-intensive areas where AI delivers the biggest advantage. More than two-thirds also want dedicated training in social media analytics & content creation (68.8%), PR writing & editing with AI tools (67.5%), data-driven decision making (66.3%), and crucially ethical use of AI (65.0%). The remarkably tight spread (only 15 percentage points between the top and bottom topics) shows that students do not want isolated AI modules; they want AI integrated across the entire PR curriculum, including a strong emphasis on responsible and ethical practice.

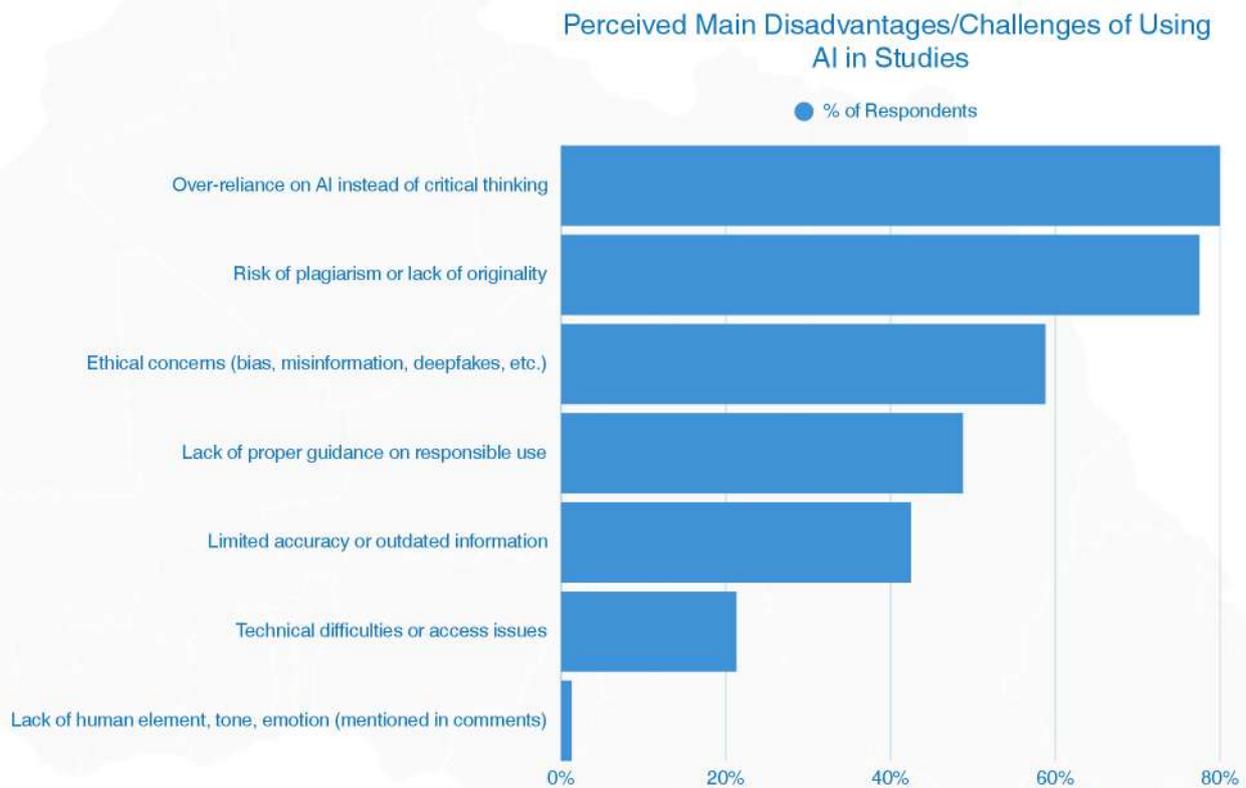## What Do You See as the Main Advantages of Using AI in Your Studies

### Perceived Main Advantages of Using AI in PR Studies

● % of Respondents



Horizontal bar chart showing:
- Saves time and increases efficiency
- Enhances creativity and idea generation
- Provides quick access to information
- Improves accuracy in writing and editing
- Helps with data analysis and reporting
- Supports better presentations and visuals

(Axis: 0%, 20%, 40%, 60%, 80%, 100%)

## Key Findings

The advantages of AI are viewed almost universally positively and broadly:

- An overwhelming 92.5% cite time-saving and efficiency as the #1 benefit by far the strongest consensus in the entire survey.
- More than three-quarters see AI as a powerful creativity and idea-generation booster (76.3%), countering the common narrative that AI stifles originality.
- Quick access to information (73.8%) and improved writing/editing accuracy (72.5%) are also selected by clear majorities, showing AI is valued both as a knowledge engine and a quality-control tool.
- Solid majorities further recognise benefits in data analysis & reporting (65%) and presentation/visual design (58.8%).

In short, students do not see AI as merely a shortcut they perceive it as a multi-dimensional study superpower that accelerates work, sharpens quality, sparks ideas, and handles complex analytical and design tasks more effectively than traditional methods.

## Perceived Main Disadvantages/Challenges of Using AI in Studies

### Perceived Main Disadvantages/Challenges of Using AI in Studies

● % of Respondents



Over-reliance on AI instead of critical thinking
Risk of plagiarism or lack of originality
Ethical concerns (bias, misinformation, deepfakes, etc.)
Lack of proper guidance on responsible use
Limited accuracy or outdated information
Technical difficulties or access issues
Lack of human element, tone, emotion (mentioned in comments)
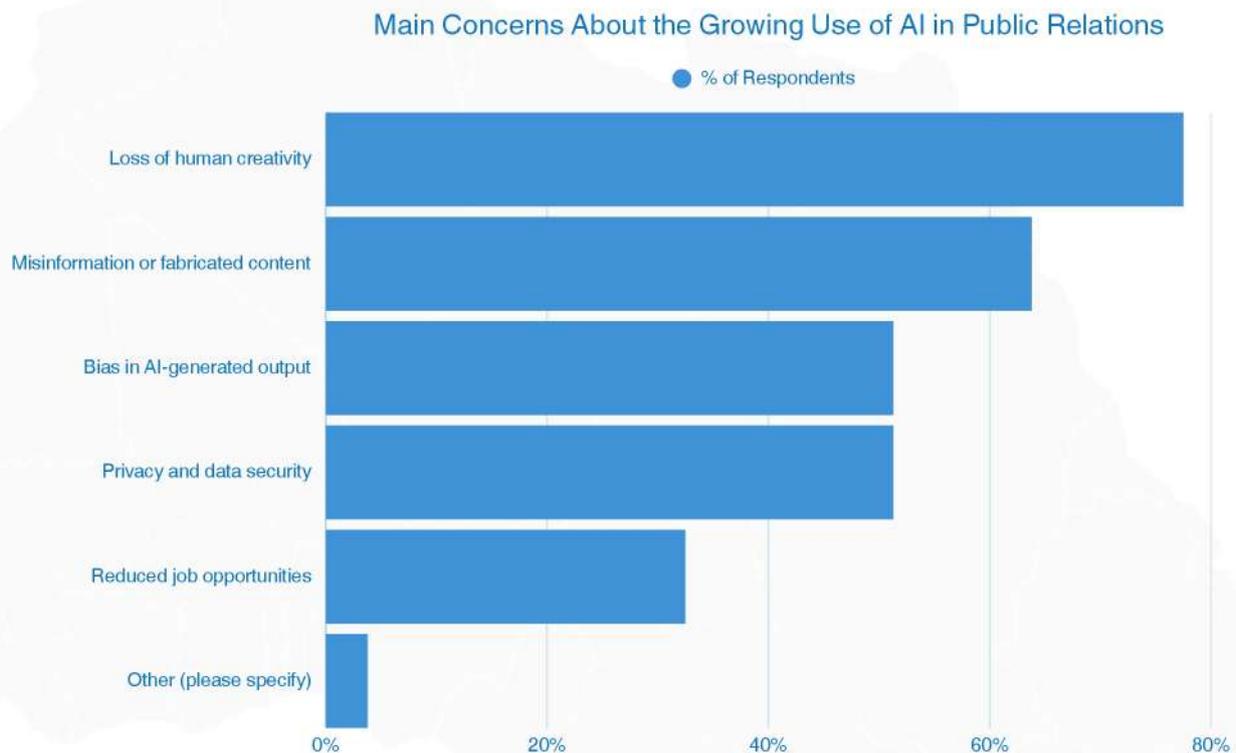
0%　20%　40%　60%　80%

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## Key Findings

While students are enthusiastic users of AI, they are not naïve about its risks. The two dominant concerns each selected by more than three-quarters of respondents are **over-reliance on AI instead of developing their own critical thinking (80%)** and **risk of plagiarism or loss of originality (77.5%).** These fears reflect deep anxiety that AI could undermine the very skills universities are meant to build.

More than half (58.8%) also worry about ethical issues such as **bias and misinformation**, and almost half (48.8%) feel there is insufficient institutional guidance on how to use AI responsibly. Concerns about **inaccurate or outdated outputs** (42.5%) and **technical/access barriers** (21.3%) are real but clearly secondary. Overall, the disadvantages profile shows a mature, balanced student body that embraces AI's power but urgently wants clearer rules, better training, and safeguards to protect academic integrity and independent thinking.

## Main Concerns About the Growing Use of AI in Public Relations

### Main Concerns About the Growing Use of AI in Public Relations

● % of Respondents

| Concern | |
|---|---|
| Loss of human creativity | |
| Misinformation or fabricated content | |
| Bias in AI-generated output | |
| Privacy and data security | |
| Reduced job opportunities | |
| Other (please specify) | |

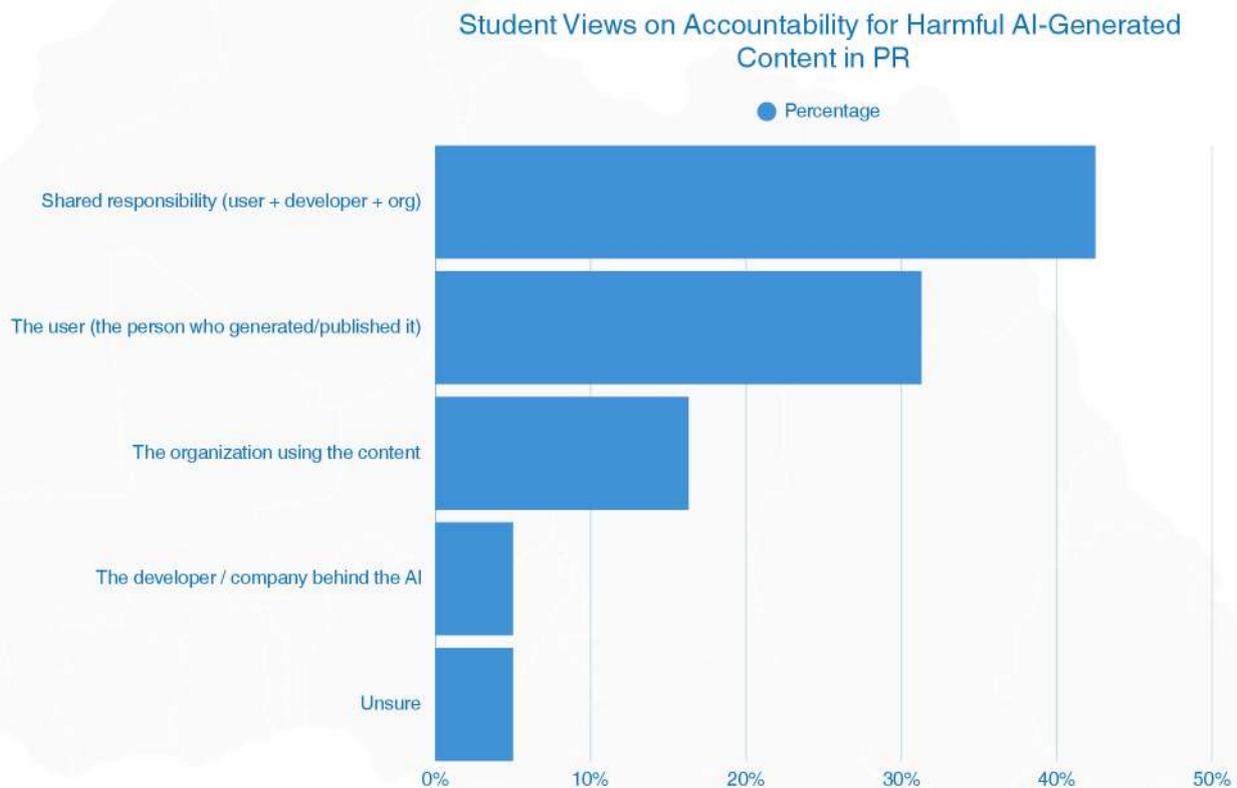0%   20%   40%   60%   80%

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### Key Findings

The dominant fear is clearly the **loss of human creativity (77.5%)** — far more students are worried that AI will erode the uniquely human spark of PR than about any other single issue.

**Misinformation and fabricated content** ranks second (63.8%), reflecting deep anxiety about deepfakes, false narratives, and erosion of trust in an already fragile information ecosystem.
Bias in AI output and privacy/data security tie for third place (both 51.3%), showing balanced concern about both fairness and the protection of personal/organisational data.

Only about one-third (32.5%) fear **reduced job opportunities**, suggesting that today's PR students are more concerned about the "dumbing down" the profession or damaging its credibility than about AI directly taking their future jobs.

Overall, the concerns profile reveals a cohort that is excited about AI but deeply protective of PR's creative soul and its ethical responsibility to society.

## Student Views on Accountability for Harmful AI-Generated Content in PR

### Student Views on Accountability for Harmful AI-Generated Content in PR

● Percentage

| Category | |
|---|---|
| Shared responsibility (user + developer + org) | |
| The user (the person who generated/published it) | |
| The organization using the content | |
| The developer / company behind the AI | |
| Unsure | |

0%　10%　20%　30%　40%　50%

---

### Key Findings

A plurality of respondents (42.5%) believe **accountability should be shared** among the user, the organization, and the AI developer reflecting a sophisticated, systemic understanding of responsibility in the AI era.

Almost one-third (31.3%) place **primary responsibility on the individual user** who decides to generate and publish the content, while 16.3% point to the organization deploying it.

Only **5% hold the AI developer/company mainly accountable**, and another 5% remain unsure.

The dominance of "shared responsibility" and "the user" together (nearly 74%) signals strong consensus that human actors not just tech companies must remain answerable, even as AI becomes common in PR practice.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AGENCIES



## 1: Build Owned Media as Core Infrastructure

**What to do:**
Shift investment from short-term platform tactics to owned media ecosystems blogs, podcasts, newsletters, proprietary communities, and first-party data environments.

**Why it matters:**
Algorithm volatility and declining organic reach undermine long-term brand equity. Owned channels restore control, continuity, and audience intelligence.

**What success looks like:**
- Reduced reliance on social platforms for reach
- Stronger audience loyalty and repeat engagement
- Data-driven storytelling independence

## 2: Ethics as a Brand Asset

**What to do:**
Agencies should market their responsible AI adoption policies (human oversight, transparency)

**Why it matters:**
Trust is extremely important. Clients, regulators, and global partners increasingly scrutinize how narratives are generated, attributed, and governed.

**What success looks like:**
- Ethics statements embedded in pitches and proposals
- Stronger credibility with multinational and public-sector clients
- Reduced reputational and regulatory risk

## 3: Cross-border Collaboration

**What to do:**
Participate in structured cross-border alliances to share insight, talent, and campaign intelligence while maintaining cultural specificity.

**Why it matters:**
Scaling without cultural fluency erodes authenticity and effectiveness.

**What success looks like:**
- Regionally adaptable campaigns
- Faster learning cycles across markets
- Shared standards without cultural flattening

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTITIONERS

**Elevating PR from Execution to Stewardship**



## 1: Executive-Level AI Ethics Training

**What to do:**
Introduce executive level AI ethics training for senior leaders particularly CEOs and founders focused on misinformation, bias, authorship, and reputational risk.

**Why it matters:**
With over 40% of practitioners operating at leadership level, AI risk is now a governance issue, not a technical one.

**What success looks like:**
- Informed leadership decisions on AI deployment
- Clear accountability frameworks
- Reduced exposure to narrative crises

## 2: Cultural Storytelling Frameworks

**What to do:**
Develop cultural storytelling frameworks that codify local language, humor, and symbolic references into campaign planning.

**Why it matters:**
Authenticity is contextual. Generic narratives erode trust and relevance.

**What success looks like:**
- Higher engagement and cultural resonance
- Stronger community identification with brands
- Reduced backlash from cultural missteps

## 3: Replace Broadcast PR with Dialogue

**What to do:**
Design campaigns around participation polls, co-created content, community forums, and influencer partnerships.

**Why it matters:**
Audiences increasingly expect to shape narratives, not just consume them.

**What success looks like:**
- Deeper engagement rather than passive reach
- Community-led amplification
- Stronger long-term trust indicators

## 4: Trust Metrics Over Vanity Metric

**What to do:**
Prioritize sentiment, engagement depth, retention, and advocacy over impressions and follower counts.

**Why it matters:**
Vanity metrics distort performance assessment and decision-making.

**What success looks like:**
- Clear links between communication and reputation outcomes
- Evidence-based strategy refinement
- Greater credibility with leadership teams

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACADEMIA
**Rebuilding the Talent Pipeline for a Digital-First Era**



## 1: Modernize PR Curricula

**What to do:**
Embed AI literacy, digital storytelling, and analytics as core competencies within communications programs.

**Why it matters:**
Graduates are entering a profession already transformed by automation and data.

**What success looks like:**
- Work-ready graduates
- Reduced skills gap between academia and industry
- Stronger institutional relevance

## 2: Center African Case Studies

**What to do:**
Replace Western-dominant examples with African campaigns reflecting regional realities and constraints.

**Why it matters:**
Context shapes strategy. Imported models often fail in local environments.

**What success looks like:**

- Higher student engagement
- Greater cultural confidence among graduates
- Locally grounded strategic thinking

## 3: Establish Ethics & AI Labs

**What to do:**
Present students with opportunities to test AI tools while interrogating bias, misinformation, and cultural sensitivity.

**Why it matters:**
Ethical awareness must be built early

**What success looks like:**
- Critical, responsible AI practitioners
- Stronger institutional ethics leadership
- Industry-ready experimentation skill

## 4: Formalize University–Agency Partnerships

**What to do:**
Develop structured internship and project pipelines across tech, NGO, and government sectors.

**Why it matters:**
Experiential learning accelerates professional readiness.

**What success looks like:**
- Seamless transition from classroom to practice
- Talent pipelines aligned to industry needs
- Stronger university industry trust

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STUDENTS & EMERGING PROFESSIONALS



## 1: Prioritize Practical Upskilling

**What to do:**
Pursue short-term certifications in writing assistants, design tools, social listening, and analytics.

**Why it matters:**
Technical fluency increasingly determines employability.

**What success looks like:**
- Faster career entry
- Hybrid creative–technical profiles
- Greater professional confidence

## 2: Invest in Grassroots Storytelling

**What to do:**
Document overlooked in all industries and sectors Governance & Leadership, Innovations by local entrepreneurs and youth movements

**Why it matters:**
Narrative power increasingly flows from the ground up.

**What success looks like:**
- Distinct professional voices
- Strong personal brands
- Contribution to African narrative ownership

## 3: Pursue Mentorship

**What to do:**
Pursue mentorship with seasoned practitioners while sharing digital-first skills upward.

**Why it matters:**
The experience gap cannot be closed by technology alone.

**What success looks like:**
- Accelerated professional maturity
- Intergenerational knowledge transfer
- Stronger industry cohesion

# CONTRIBUTORS

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**Nyandia Gachago**
FOUNDER
**MINTYLIME**

**Dr. Caroline Kiarie**
SENIOR LECTURER,
**AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY**

**Celine Planel**
MANAGING DIRECTOR
**BEYOND COMMUNICATIONS**

**Tshego Kekana**
FOUNDER
**ALFA DESTINY COMMUNICATIONS**

**Paul Kigumo**
CEO
**KWETU MARKETING AGENCY**

**Eudius Njoroge**
CEO
**EPB AFRICA**

**Anna Ceesay**
FOUNDER
**FABELLA COMMUNICATIONS**

**Flora Limukii**
HEAD OF PR & COMMUNICATIONS
**SPIRO**

**Cyrille Djami**
CEO
**COMMSOFAFRICA**

**Tokunboh George**
FOUNDER & CEO
**SKOT COMMUNICATIONS,**

**Emma Wenani**
CHIEF DIRECTOR
**GLOBAL MEDIA ALLIANCE**

**Alex Owiti**
MANAGING DIRECTOR
**ALEXANDER PR**

**Lorraine Onduru**
COMMUNICATIONS CONSULTANT &
CEO
**MAJESTY PUBLISHING HOUSE**

**Mabel Adeteye**
HEAD OF BRANDS & MARKETING
COMMUNICATIONS
**WEMA BANK**

**Lovelyne Okafor**
SENIOR ACCOUNT MANAGER
**NEWMARK GROUP**

**Fatma Halim**
SENIOR COMMUNICATIONS CONSULTANT
**PUBLICIST INC**

# CONTRIBUTORS

**Esther Njagali**
MANAGING PARTNER
**SPRINGFORTH ADVISORY**

**Selam Berhanu**
CEO
**SPOTLIGHT**

**Naomi Senda**
GLOBAL COMMUNICATION AND
POLICY STRATEGIST - **COMMUNITY**

**Princess Sekyere**
FOUNDER
**KINGDOM CONCEPTS CONSULT**

**Pressy Kaburu**
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT
**WEBER SHANDWICK**

**Benedict Aguele**
CEO
**BOAPR**

**Lerato Chiyangwa**
FOUNDER
**MARLETA COMMUNICATIONS**

**Andrew Barden**
CEO
**THE KENYAN WALL STREET**

**Kennedy Mmari**
CEO
**SERENGETI BYTES**

**Annette Wachira**
COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST
**DHANA COMMUNICATIONS**

**Dr. Yetty Ogunnubi**
CEO
**THE YD COMPANY**

**Joel Chacha**
DIRECTOR
**PORTLAND COMMUNICATIONS**

**Prudence Glorious**
CHIEF PURPOSE OFFICER
**PZG**

**Lekha Seebaluck**
MANAGING DIRECTOR,
**BLAST PR & EVENTS LTD (BLAST BURSON)**

# | AGENCIES

# Prevail

## Own The Narrative.
## Track The Impact.

Turn Campaigns into Insights

## OVERVIEW

Prevail is a media and brand intelligence tool that is AI-powered designed to help organizations monitor, analyze, and understand their brand. By combining media monitoring with brand listening, the platform provides communication teams with real-time insights into media coverage, narratives, and public perception.

In an environment where information flows rapidly across digital channels, organizations require tools that move beyond manual monitoring and fragmented reporting. Prevail addresses this challenge by applying digital intelligence to continuously track brand mentions, identify emerging narratives, and analyze the tone and context of conversations surrounding a brand.

## CORE CAPABILITIES

### 1. Media Monitoring

Prevail continuously scans online news outlets, blogs, and digital publications to capture brand mentions and relevant media coverage. This capability allows organizations to track where their brand appears, how frequently it is referenced, and which media outlets are shaping the narrative. By consolidating coverage into a single dashboard, the platform enables teams to measure visibility, evaluate PR performance, and identify potential reputational risks or opportunities as they emerge.

### 2. Brand Listening and Sentiment Analysis

Beyond tracking mentions, Prevail analyses the broader context in which brands are discussed. The platform identifies tone, themes, and sentiment within media narratives. This allows organizations to understand how their brand is perceived and detect shifts in public sentiment early. These insights help communication teams refine messaging strategies, respond proactively to narratives, and maintain alignment with audience perception.

## KEY FEATURES

### Media and Brand Monitoring

Prevail tracks brand mentions, keywords, and topics across digital media platforms, providing structured visibility into coverage and emerging stories.

### Campaign Management and Insights

The platform transforms PR and communication activities into measurable insights, enabling teams to track campaign reach, media pickup, and overall communication impact.

### Multi-Brand and Agency Support

Designed for scalability, Prevail supports organizations managing multiple brands or clients, allowing agencies and communications teams to track multiple portfolios within one system.

### User-Friendly Dashboard and Collaboration Tools

An intuitive interface enables teams to monitor activity, analyze insights, and generate reports efficiently, while collaboration features allow multiple users to manage workflows and share intelligence.

### All-in-One Visibility Platform

Prevail consolidates monitoring, listening, campaign analysis, and reporting into a single system, reducing the need for multiple tools and enabling more efficient decision-making.

## STRATEGIC VALUE

Prevail equips organizations with intelligence that transforms coverage into actionable insight. By tracking both the presence and perception of a brand; the platform helps communication teams to respond quickly to reputational risks, amplify positive coverage, and measure the real impact of their work.

For agencies and organizations managing multiple brands, Prevail also simplifies complex monitoring workflows by centralizing insights into a single dashboard. This allows teams to operate more strategically, using data-driven insights to guide communication decisions, strengthen brand reputation, and shape media narratives more effectively.

**www.prevail.africa**

# THE GLASS HOUSE PR REPORT 2026

## TALK TO US:

4th Floor Laiboni Centre,
Lenana Road, Nairobi, Kenya
+254 714 001 891 | +254 (020) 493 8249

www.glasshousepr.co.ke
info@glasshousepr.co.ke
@glasshousepr

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