

## Tendencies of Development of Public Relation in Ukraine: Practical Experience and New Challenges 2021-2022

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**Goroshko Olena**Dr.Sc. (in Sociology and Linguistics), Full Prof., <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8592-1022>, [olena.goroshko1965@yahoo.com](mailto:olena.goroshko1965@yahoo.com)**Mechenkova Nataliia**Senior Lecturer, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6893-8754>, [mnala2328@gmail.com](mailto:mnala2328@gmail.com)

National Technical University "Kharkiv Polytechnic Institute" (Kharkiv, Ukraine)

### Abstract

The article is devoted to the description of new approaches and characteristics of PR-activities in Ukraine and the analysis of existing PR-trends. Based on a survey of experts engaged in different areas of the economy and conducted at the end of 2021, in the comparative framework of different sectors of economy, it was found that many trends publicly discussed by experts as digitalization, social media development, etc. are confirmed, but in some areas, they possess more or less intensity. It concerns the influence and use of social media, leaders of opinions and reputational management. In connection with the trends identified by the survey, more questions were devoted to social media, reputation management, and the features that experts mentioned when working with these areas. Some of the ideas highlighted by experts are not confirmed as trends, among them - changes in the work of the press service.

In general, the survey reveals more similar observations and evaluations, showing directions and highlighting interesting cases for Ukrainian professionals. Based on the data obtained it is possible to speak about the transformation of the PR-market in 2021: More creative cooperation in the structure of integrated marketing communications allows using a broader and more structured approach, to get more quantitative and qualitative performance indicators that can be measured and analyzed.

In 2022, due to the outbreak of war in the country, all PR spheres have undergone significant changes, and now, gradually, after a forced halt, begin to work and adapt to the current situation. The authors think that at this stage it is important to identify and describe the main challenges and difficulties in PR activities for understanding their significance and intensity on the development of both the PR market and the profession as a whole.

**Keywords:** public relations, tendencies of development, pandemic, war, Ukraine

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## Тенденції розвитку публік рілейшнз в Україні: практичний досвід та нові виклики 2021-2022 р.р.

**Горошко Олена, Меченкова Наталія**

Національний технічний університет «Харківський політехнічний інститут» (Харків, Україна)

### Анотація

Стаття присвячена опису нових підходів та особливостям PR-діяльності в Україні та аналізу PR-трендів, що склалися. На основі проведеного наприкінці 2021 року опитування експертів, зайнятих у різних сферах економіки, у контексті зіставлення низки секторів економіки, було виявлено, що багато тенденцій, які публічно обговорюють фахівці, як діджиталізація, розвиток соціальних медіа та ін. підтверджуються, однак, в окремих сферах мають більшу чи меншу ступінь інтенсивності, наприклад, той самий вплив і використання соціальних мереж, лідерів думок та репутаційного менеджменту.

У зв'язку з виявленими опитуванням тенденціями, в ході анкетування, більше питань було присвячено соціальним медіа, управлінню репутацією та особливостям, які згадували фахівці під час роботи з цими напрямками. Деякі ідеї, виділені експертами, не були підтверджені як трендові, серед них – зміни у роботі прес-служби. Загалом, опитування виявило більше подібних спостережень та оцінок, показало напрями та цікаві професіоналам кейси українських фахівців. На підставі отриманих даних можна говорити про трансформацію PR-ринку у 2021 році: більш креативна співпраця у структурі інтегрованих маркетингових комунікацій дозволяє впроваджувати у практику ширший та структурований підхід, отримувати більше кількісних та якісних показників ефективності, які можна вимірювати та аналізувати.

У 2022 році, у зв'язку з початком війни в країні, всі сфери зазнали істотних змін, і зараз поступово після вимушеної зупинки починають працювати і адаптуватися до поточної ситуації. Автори дотримуються думки, що на даному етапі – важливо визначити та описати основні виклики, щоб зрозуміти їх значущість та інтенсивність на розвиток як PR-ринку так і професії в цілому.

**Ключові слова:** зв'язки з громадськістю, тенденції розвитку, пандемія, війна, Україна

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### Introduction

In the modern world, which is changing for and as a result of the pandemics and the war, the profession of public relations meets the society's challenges: it transforms itself, discovering new facets and interacting with related spheres of activity. Significantly this sphere has been changed under the influence of global communications and modern ICTs, which makes this topic relevant.

We should note that public relations (PR) as a profession began to develop in 1990th. However, it began to change heavily over the last 10-15 years under the influence of several factors, such as the development of local and global business in Ukraine, the development of competition and markets, and political and social changes.

Now PR is changing due to many external and internal factors, so the study and analysis of expert data as an essential part of the development of scientific and practical information helps to consider the subject and its objectives in the context of time, generally, and to detail individual phenomena and processes, in particular.

### Aims and objectives of the research

In addition to the stable periods of political, economic, and socio-cultural development in the country, researchers pay a lot of attention to the transformational periods. It is especially relevant now when Ukrainian society and business experienced COVID-19 in 2020-2021, and now, in 2022, it's in a large-scale war with the Russian Federation.

Challenges of the time introduce a particular phenomenon when established methods and tools are tested and improved by the old and new ones. In recent years in this field, we can talk about the appearance of a whole range of non-standard situations, and we as researchers fix some features noted by experts and scholars, which form trends in the subject field of public relations.

Therefore, the purpose of our study is to analyze the trends and changes in the PR services market in Ukraine, which works under the influence of both the pandemic factor and the war, and to describe the changes caused by these factors in the PR profession itself.

### Review of the literature

Among the significant works of Ukrainian scientists in the field of PR there are articles and monographs - V. Berezenko (Berezenko, 2014; Berezenko, & Kerymov, 2020), dedicated to the structure and definition of PR as a concept and discipline, O. Derevyanko (2019), exploring the theoretical aspects and practical data of reputation management, tasks and tools of marketing communications, V. Korolko (Korol'ko, & Nekrasova, 2009) as one of the founders of the definition of public relations in Ukraine and its introduction into the scientific dictionary, A. Kurban (2017), who studies the issues of social communications, O. Nekrasova as a scholar associated with the theory of PR and marketing, D.

Bogush (2007) and his research related to contacts in the field of PR, image and branding, G. Pocheptsov (2000), one of the leading researchers in the field of imageology in politics, business and culture, T. Primak (Pavlenko, Vojchak, & Prymak, 2005), the founder of the school of marketing communications and others.

The definition of public relations or PR was introduced into Ukrainian scientific discourse by Georgiy Pocheptsov. He defines PR as the science of public opinion management (Pocheptsov, 2000, p. 16). Valentin Korolko, in turn, identifies "public relations" as the relationship and interaction between separated organizations, among these organizations, and the public groups around them.

There are more modern Ukrainian sources where you can find the definition: public relations present a managerial activity aimed at establishing mutually beneficial harmonious relations between the organization and the public, on which the success of the organization's functioning depends (Zhutova, 2019).

The scope of public relations is constantly expanding and transforming: if earlier, more attention was paid to PR as public relations (Korol'ko, & Nekrasova, 2009), now, often, it is considered more through the structure of marketing communications (Popova et al., 2020).

### Methodology

Two methods are used as research tools - content analysis and expert interviews - to study experts' opinions about the PR services market.

The Likert scale is used to assess expert opinions, allowing one to determine the intensity of the manifestation of a particular factor and the personal attitude to it. The survey conducted with this scale made it possible to more accurately assess the level of support or refutation of a particular opinion about a trend stated by experts or described in studies in the PR field by authoritative specialized organizations.

Initially, while preparing questions for an expert interview, the content-analysis of publications of such organizations and editions as the Ukrainian version of Forbes magazine, specialized resource Marketing&Media Review, official sites of PRes Association UA, Ukrainian Marketing Association, European Business Association, All-Ukrainian Advertising Coalition, and others was conducted. For the sample, we use data on trends, which as a result of quantitative calculation, has formed a list of 10 most frequently mentioned areas of work. After the received information is processed by qualitative method, distributing it according to the main areas of activity: politics, business, social and cultural industries. As a result, a list of the most relevant topics - trends characterizing the situation in the main spheres of activity is formed based on the analysis results.

One can consider that the most relevant perception of the researched sphere reflecting modern forms and directions is the opinion of professionals recommended by communities of specialists who have been working

in the field of public relations for three years and more (Table 1) and have enough successful cases as heads of PR structure of different levels or working as part of PR group (Table 2) in the main fields (Table 3), with the education in the field of philological sciences (Table 4). Therefore, a total of 26 experts from Ukraine are interviewed. The formalized interview technique is used during the individual expert interview to cross-check the trends. Also, during the interviewing, informalized interview methods are used as well, some of which are prepared to collect the necessary basic information, and some of which are independent, when the expert cites specific cases and shares his own work experience.

You can find the questions of the questionnaire, the

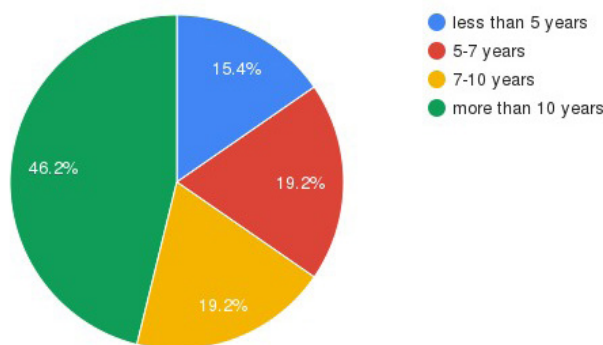
data that served as material for analysis with subsequent conclusions, in Appendix 1.

To confirm the professional level of the interviewed respondents, we invite them to participate with the help of professional organizations: PRes Association UA, Ukrainian Marketing Association, and All-Ukrainian Advertising Coalition. As a result, we compiled a so-called expert profile, where we collected quantitative data about their experience in the profession, areas of their activities, and basic higher and special education.

Professional experience largely depends on the tasks performed by the expert. Thus, quantitative data on the work period (Table 1) shows the length of work in the expert field.

**Table 1.**

**Work period in PR, %**

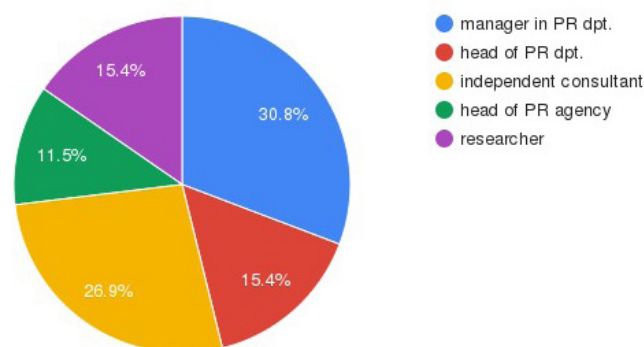


The largest group of respondents, 46% has worked in PR for more than ten years; the rest of the respondents are relatively divided into groups employed in the professional field: in equal shares, 19% each, groups from 5 to 7 years, and from 7 to 9 years, a little fewer respondents are employed in PR for less than five years - 15%.

Most of the interviewed experts work in PR departments (31%), and a relatively large proportion of independent consultants who are engaged in consulting in two or more areas - 27%, there are heads of PR departments - 15, 4%, in companies, and 11.5% are heads of PR-businesses. The share of researchers engaged in theory and analysis of practical data was 15, 4% (Table 2).

**Table 2.**

**Level of responsibility of respondents, according to their position in the structure of the PR market, %**

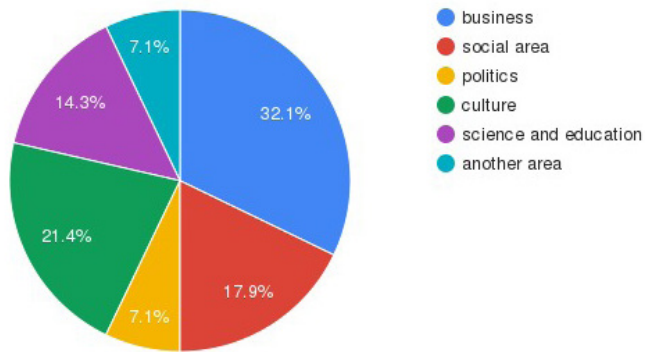


The sphere of activity of our respondents reflects the current ratio: the majority of participants in Ukraine work

in the business sector (32%), followed by the social and cultural sector (32% and 21.4%) (Table 3).

**Table 3.**

**Scope of PR-specialists**



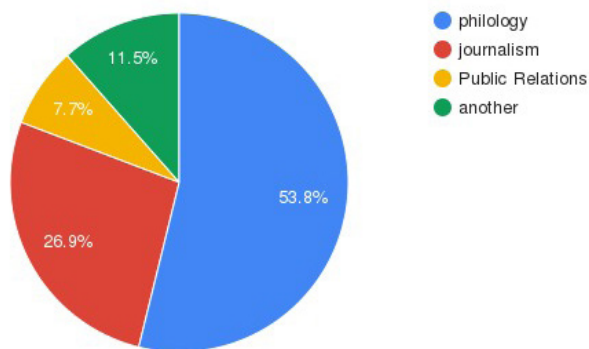
Experts working in politics, respectively, make up only 7%. It should be noted that some professionals are engaged in several spheres simultaneously; first of all, it concerns consultants and heads of PR agencies.

The majority of the respondents, about 54%, mentioned philology as their education, whereas

27% stated journalism (Table 4); retraining or advanced training in public relations was mentioned by 12 specialists as a base for their work, which constitutes 46%, the rest preferred mastering special knowledge and skills only in practice.

**Table 4.**

**Professional education**



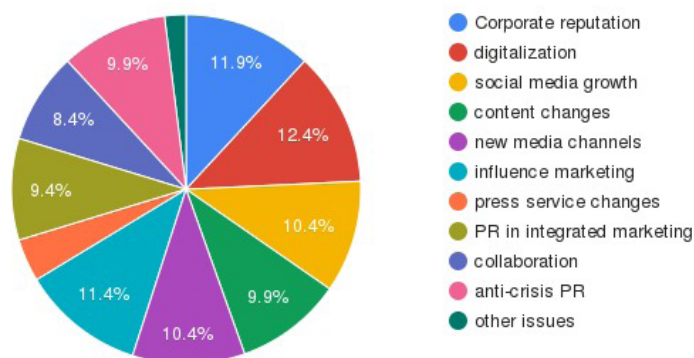
**The research results**

The data of quantitative and qualitative content analysis reveal a list of trends in the

sphere of public relations, relevant in 2021-2022, before the outbreak of war hostilities in Ukraine (Table 5):

**Table 5.**

**Trends with the intensity of their manifestation**



According to the survey, one of the main trends is universal digitalization, the speed of which has increased manifold due to the pandemic.

The authors select digitalization from the various translations of the terms "digital" and "digitalization" in English. It is based on the maximum number of searches

by Google in 2022, and the opinion of researchers such as Ganna Zhosan, who explored the application of the concept of "digitalization" in Ukraine (Zhosan, 2020, p. 47), Galina Luchko, Vitaly Saiko, engaged in identifying trends of digitalization in Ukraine (Sajko, & Luchko, 2021, p. 109). "The emergence and active functioning of the digital environment requires the introduction of innovative approaches and tools for PR communication and understanding the role of public relations in modern business conditions" (Berezenko, & Kerymov, 2020, p. 99).

The intensive development of this process was possible with the influence of global ICT giants - Google, Apple, Facebook, etc. (Séguéla, 2018). Thus, with the beginning of the pandemic in all spheres of different levels, employees were forced to learn ICT skills and specific computer programs as quickly as possible. As a result, 95% of respondents note this factor at a high level - 4 (from of 5) on the Likert scale (Table 5) - which amounted to 12.4% of the total, with over 80% noting increased use of social media and more structured work with the audience, through interaction and participation in online events.

"In terms of digitalization, Ukraine is lagging behind Europe and the United States. But the COVID-19 pandemic and related restrictions have stimulated the growth of digital technologies use" (Demchenko, 2021, p. 27).

Studying the examples for the years 2020-2021, the authors consider that if digital was a trend and an additional tool, then during the active phase of the pandemic, it became a vital necessity.

Now you might not want to use online so much, i.e., move away from this virtual experience. Still, the target audiences have felt the convenience of online event participation, interactive interaction, and the rapid development of social media. Therefore, successful use cases involve more specialists and PR audiences working with these modern communication channels.

Olena Derevyanko, vice president of the Ukrainian PR-League, believes that digitalization is becoming more profound, and you can find more and more communication channels (PR-profi, 2021).

The analysis of experts' opinions showed that

speakers said about the growth of digital presence in the field of public relations, there are two main directions: holding events in an online or hybrid format (online-offline) and new interactive communications using technology to engage stakeholders and strengthen effective communications with them. The results of the survey, the participants, when asked what they most remembered as an illustration of digitalization in Ukraine, noted the holding of the International PR Festival in Kyiv, in a hybrid format in three languages, the international conference PRO DECÒ 2021 on "Emotional spaces," experience and implementation of the project state in the smartphone - state application "Dija," many experts also cited the forced transition of school and university education to the online format. Furthermore, in 2022 the 15th Ukrainian Marketing Forum is also planned to be held in a hybrid form.

When analyzing expert opinions, we should pay attention to one more direction - the rapid growth and development of social media and "the main place allocated for defining one's identity" - accounts, where "the process of constructing and functioning of virtual identity" takes place (Zadyraka, 2016). "The main technology that makes it possible to implement all of the above functions in social networks is a personal account, which can exist in the form of a standard personal page, as well as a blog, public (thematic communities, video and photo collections), business accounts (cafes and restaurants, travel agencies, production, various services), etc." (Biriukova, 2021, p. 142). Furthermore, accounts actively developing and gaining an audience that becomes loyal begin to be perceived as pleasure and entertainment and as work that generates income. Accordingly, interest in such activities as a project is increasing. Based on these assumptions, experts believe that developing a personal brand online will continue to be essential.

According to global Internet research organizations, in just a few months in 2020, during the pandemic period, international Internet traffic increased by 48%, and people around the world spent more time on Internet-connected devices (Internet Traffic, 2020) (Figure №1):

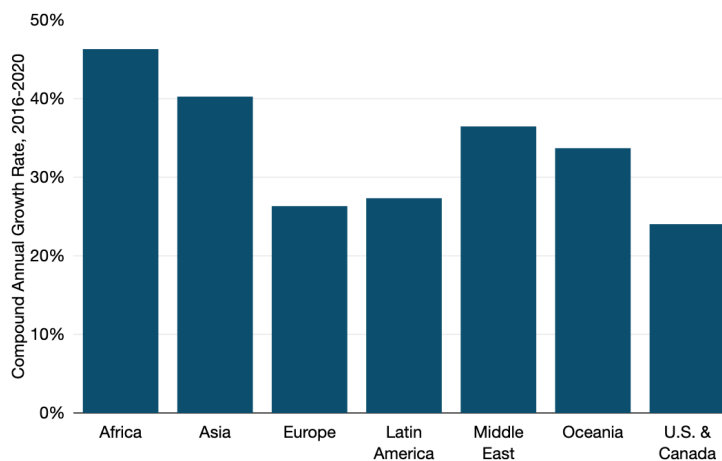
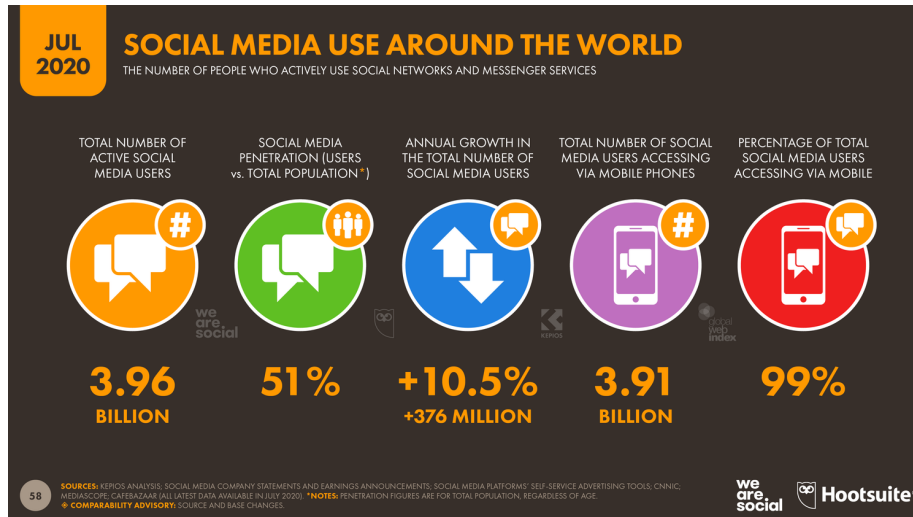


Figure 1. Cumulative annual growth rate 2016-2020

The Digital 2020: July Global Statshot report reveals several new trends, among them: the use of social networks by more than half of the world's population, the preservation of some habits, such as intensified online communication with loved ones and

colleagues, increased attendance at online events, etc. That is, these activities boosted during the pandemic and persisted as a cheaper, more convenient, and alternative option after the relaxation of the quarantine (Digital 2020, 2020):



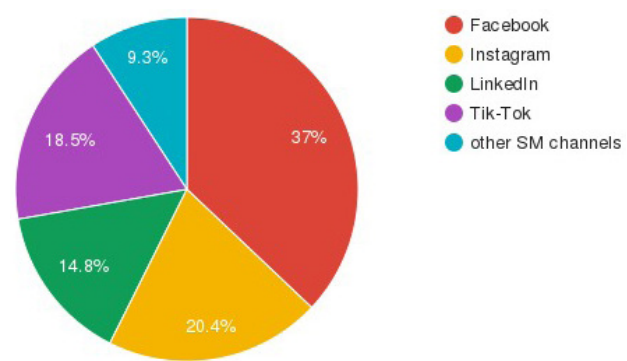
Picture 1. Social Media Use around the World

A survey of Ukrainian experts shows that similar changes are relevant in our country; that is, we can assume that foreign trends are close to our PR market. Also, in our country, among the most popular PR tools

are such social networks as Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, and TikTok (Table 6), which lead also the ratings of the world social media (Telegram 2021, 2021).

Working with social media specialists

Table 6.



All 100% of the interviewed experts noted that they work with social media. However, when asked which social networks and messengers they use, the answers were briefer: some pointed out only one channel (more than 75%), and the remaining 25% indicated a maximum of 2 channels. According to experts, the main advantage of social media is the possibility of direct dialogue with the client, increasing audience loyalty and attracting new ones. In the authors' opinion, the choice of 1-2 channels may be due to the focus of the specialist on the part of the overall work. At the same time, other employees are busy filling and coordinating other social networks.

Developing new communication channels is growing in terms of technical issues and creative projects for the work of professionals in marketing and PR. Now there is an active search and use of new channels of PR-communication and communication formats, for example, an independent journalistic business portal mind.ua, the development of Telegram channels. However, Telegram was founded as a messenger, but now it is more used as a social network. "Building effective relationships with public groups is still the main goal of public relations. But against the trend of falling efficiency of traditional media and narrowing their audience, the trend of using the blogosphere, new media, and social networks, i.e.,

digital channels, is relevant. Suppose you do not follow the new channels of distribution of messages, such as messengers. In that case, it will be difficult to determine the demand and tastes of the target audience, to choose interesting and understandable content for it" (Berezenko, & Kerymov, 2020).

When working with a "younger audience," more often it's used Instagram and TikTok. For an older audience and products/services, the professionals use Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn more seriously. Telegram is growing in popularity: in January 2021, this messenger crossed the 500 million monthly active users mark. There was also an increase in its downloads - amid news about changes in WhatsApp, banning the Parler app, and Trump's blocking of Twitter. Then 25 million new users joined Telegram within 72 hours. In the same days, the messenger came in second place by downloads in the United States - it was downloaded about 545 thousand times, three times more than a week earlier (Telegram 2021, 2021). An exciting example demonstrated the Internet phenomenon of the closed social network was ClubHouse (Pavlenko, & Khomenko, 2021): for three months, this network managed to attract a large audience around the world to constant discussions: from May 2020 to February 2021, the application was downloaded and used by 1 million people. (Strielkowski, 2021), and then also rapidly lost its popularity. The audience of users of such popular messengers as Viber and WhatsApp is also increasing. The pandemic also initiated the rapid development of online conferencing tools - such as Zoom, Skype, Teams, etc. Zoom was developed initially for corporate business, but during the lockdown, it became a place for business communication and gained popularity as a social communication channel, holding video conferences in education, politics, economics, etc. In education, for example, as a result, the company's sales in the last three months of 2020 were up 370% over the same period in 2019, reaching \$882.5 million (Zoom's Profits, 2021).

With the development of social media, the information content of both social networks and press releases is also changing. Information is transmitted more quickly, and therefore more briefly, with elements of interpersonal communication in an informal setting and emotional coloring to emphasize personalization, attention, and trust. Also, the expert survey noted the advantage of visual content over text.

We emphasize that with the exponential growth and development of social media, in the structure of digital marketing appear so-called influencers - leaders of opinion with a loyal audience and there is a related direction of influencer marketing. Leaders of opinion can be both ordinary users of social networks and celebrities. Often, the latter accounts are located on more "promoted" online platforms. The essence of a blogger influencer's work is a sincere passion and an interest in brands and products that reflect their values and coincide with the

chosen product or service. Note that, over time, such a hobby is seen as a job for Influencers and an effective PR tool for professionals. PR work is facilitated by international ratings of people and platforms involved in the influence marketing system can be found in the public domain: national ratings, general or industry ratings. Thus, the Ukrainian list of the 100 most inspiring people includes opinion leaders in different spheres of activity (Ukraine Top, 2020):

№ 1 Eugene Klopotenko, chef, culinary expert, and co-founder of the restaurant "100 Years Ago";

№ 2 Alisa Cooper, food blogger;

№ 3 Lera Borodina, the founder of the clothing rental service Oh my look! and Lavla gift stores, co-founder of the chain of beauty salons G.bar and Korean clothing brands So Dodo;

№4 Olga Kudinenko - founder of the charitable foundation "Tabletochki" and member of the Board of Trustees of Children's Hospital "Okhmatdet";

№5 Andrey Burenok - founder of trippy dream air ticket and travel search service;

№6 Dmytro Dubilet - co-founder of Fintech Band, which launched monobank, and sports club Smartass, as well as ex-minister of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine;

№ 7 Sergey Makhno, architect, designer, and founder of the Ukrainian design studio Sergey Makhno Architects;

№ 8 Yaroslava Gres, co-founder of Gres Todorchuk PR agency

№ 9 Artemiy Surin, professional traveler, founder, and ideologist of "One life" company which organizes group tours to non-tourist places;

№10 Vasily Khmelnytsky, investor, founder of UFuture holding company, K.Fund, and creator of innovative parks UNIT.City in Kyiv and Kharkiv.

The top ten included (six men and four women, distinguished by a sincere interest in work and life, who realize their mission and are open to communication as opinion leaders. Among their spheres of activity are cooking, online services for a broad audience, architecture, and business for a narrower audience, with the caveat that these accounts attract more attention not only from specialists but also from those who are ready to develop and who are interested in a different view of the world. The high frequency of articles by leading business publications on this topic confirms the relevance and interest in this area. For example, Forbes (Ukraine) updates the list of the most popular influencers with an audience of more than 1 million people (30 the most, 2020). Along with the term blogger, even the nouns appeared in the Ukrainian language to describe this phenomenon of leaders of opinion in social media - *ticktocker* or *instagramer*.

There are a few examples of when PR specialists prepare a long-term partnership program with the Influencer. However, with the development of social media, we can assume that there will be more such projects soon.

According to experts, before the war, the Internet market was expected to grow by at least 34% in 2022. However, the actual growth between 2020 and 2021 was 48% (All-Ukrainian Advertising, 2022). Growth in 2022 will be primarily driven by video and search advertising. Next year, the following global players (Google, Facebook, and, probably, TikTok are expected to strengthen their position. According to the All-Ukrainian Advertising Coalition, the volume of digital video advertising on YouTube increased by 59% from 2020 to 2021, influencer marketing in Ukrainian practice showed an increase of 50% from 2020-21 and development by 40% - from 2021-2022.

"The popularity of such leaders of opinion is explained by the fact that in a world of chronic information overload and trust deficit, people are looking for the points of reference in each other. And they become personalities whose names are directly associated with certain corporate and product brands (Derevjanko, 2019, Part 1, p. 243), so the volumes and figures speak for themselves, and experts in Ukraine predict active growth in this area soon".

Instagram works with content in the Beauty and Fashion category - the most popular topic in Ukraine (How Much, 2020). Ukrainian experts note that on Instagram in 2020, the most influential persons in Ukraine were micro-influencers (55.4%), with many subscribers from 5000 to 20 000 people. In January 2021, according to statistics in Ukraine, for the previous six months, the number of users of the social network Instagram increased by 1 million. Note that the average age of users of this network is from 16 to 29 years old (Audience Statistics, 2021).

The average consumer profile should emphasize that one of the goals of the transition from forums to social networks was the idea of personalization. "Before social networks, communications on the Ukrainian Internet were mostly anonymous. Even with the development of social networks, users were reluctant to publicly reveal their real names, hiding behind pseudonyms. Social networks have gradually taken a course towards de-anonymization of users. First, using a pseudonym becomes contrary to the rules and a reason for blocking the account. Then to identify it, social networks are beginning to ask users for proof of identity - scans of documents, etc." (Mel'nyk, 2021).

Thus, the realization of this task entailed a new round of personalization, when the audience prefers to trust the opinion of a blogger or a famous person - the Influencer, who develops a personal brand, and the joint work of two or more bloggers - collaboration - a multidimensional collaboration or cross-promotion becomes a popular tool in the field of PR. The conditions in which the world finds itself due to the pandemic are pushing for new forms of interaction. Thus, successful bloggers began to organize joint marathons and stream videos on their accounts. This idea attracted the attention of public relations specialists and now global brands, strengthening consumer loyalty

and attracting a new audience. "A new technology of self-promotion with the help of social networks is collaborations with other bloggers. These can be joint stories, battles and stories, and posts by one another. In this way, subscribers exchange occurs" (Biriukova, 2021).

Fashion brands have already made the first steps in this direction, which began to conduct joint promotions with rap singers. One of the most famous cases is with the most expensive brand in the world, according to Interbrand rating - Apple, which cooperated at different times with Nike; in December 2021, for example, Apple Fitness+'s "Walking" workout season finished with a special holiday edition featuring Prince William. According to the concept of the project, the workout series allows users to get out for a walk with the most exciting and meaningful people in the community, who share their stories, photos, and music. During the program, a guest, His Royal Highness Prince William, discussed why you need to take care of your mental health (Walking Workout, 2021).

The data from our expert interview show that collaboration was noted at 8.4%, with 39% defining this direction at 3 out of a possible 5 points. Respondents note that in B2C spheres, cooperation develops more dynamically; in the work of B2B markets, it takes longer to agree on the details of collaboration and allows for fewer creative ideas.

In our opinion, attractive cooperation-collaboration options can be demonstrated by companies operating in a global context. Therefore, perhaps not each expert can be associated with this level of business project and has sufficient experience in the relevant field of activity.

However, it is worth noting that collaborations for many brands have become a recognized and essential tool for PR and marketing. We can find examples of when celebrities collaborate with brands both in the practice of domestic PR and international PR. In Ukraine, this experience began with the cooperation of Avon brand with Masha Efrosinina, who became an ambassador of the company in the country. Also, Oriflame in Ukraine worked with Jamala, and Tina Karol cooperated with Huawei, etc. However, in our opinion, collaboration with celebrities or bloggers in the Ukrainian PR market presents more of an exception than an established professional practice.

It should also note that the development of digital content in social networks, the instantaneous transmission of the information at any distance and at any time, actualizes the importance of reputation and competent management.

According to the results of ICCO research for 2020-2021 in Eastern Europe, corporate reputation has become a regional trend #1, and it has also retained its relevance for many other countries in the world (ICCO World, 2021). In the ICCO report, the Eastern Europe region is singled out, but, in our opinion, a similar trend is observed in Ukraine. To Olena Derevyanko (the Ukrainian expert reputologist), there is no organizational foundation

for reputation management in the work of domestic companies, although there are intentions and individual successful cases (Derevyanko, 2019, Part 2, p. 332). Every year the Kyiv PR festival worked on the National rating of the quality of corporate reputation management "Reputation ACTIVists," where the winners were both Ukrainian and international companies. According to Olena Derevyanko, this initiative directly contributes to developing PR and PR activities.

On average, respondents identified the importance of reputation management at 12% but noted the relevance (at a level of 4 or 5).

In reputational management, compelling cases of online assessment of banks in Europe and Asia, for example, in Singapore, Deloitte Digital Banking Maturity 2020 study annually provides an analysis of professionals and customers of the banking sector, thus forming an independent assessment that contributes to the competitiveness of the sphere.

In Ukraine, there are no such resources assessing the performance of banks by customers; there is only

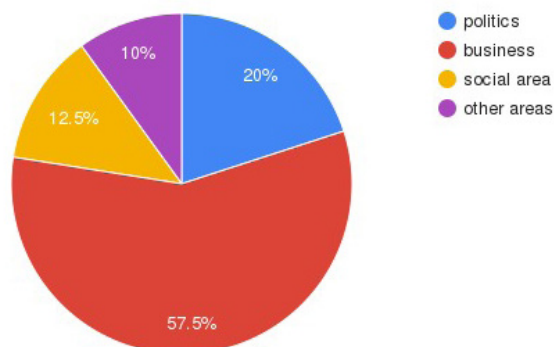
the rating of the Ministry of Justice, which takes into account the level of capital, assets, liabilities, etc. This information is helpful for specialists but provides very little information to ordinary clients. At the same time, among the rating leaders, you can see the name of the bank is often criticized by customers publicly and in personal reviews. Still, the opinion of such consumers is not reflected in its reputation.

Today in Ukrainian practice, there are examples when certain media and online resources make ratings, for example, Forbes Ukraine (15 of the most, 2021). Still, it is necessary to take into account the characteristics of the resource, among that - taking in mind the opinions and values of the international community, also such drivers as publicity and reputation of speaker, etc.

However, most experts agree that anti-crisis reputation management actively developed during 2020-2021. On a five-point scale, at the level of 4, this trend was noted by 67% of the respondents. The quantitative analysis of the distribution of this trend by the main areas of activity is interesting (Table 7):

Table 7.

Trend - anti-crisis reputation management



The business advantage is related to the broad scope of its activities, including B2B, B2C, and C2C audiences.

Considering the changing world, professions, and interest in building personal brands, it is worth mentioning the opinions of some experts who pay more attention to the so-called eco-pearl: more than 52% of respondents said this vector is significant in the structure of reputation management of the future.

It is worth referring also to the Anti-Crisis PR marathon MMR 2021 from the current circumstances, demonstrating the importance of reputation and reputation management in Ukraine.

With the actualization of ICT, many traditional articles are going "digital". The pages of news sites are also changing, and new information channels are appearing. For example, podcasts, quite popular in international PR practice, are still rarely represented in our country. The founder of the Ukrainian community PodcastsNOW.ua M. Shevchuk wrote that podcasts do not exist in the country (Mironova, 2021). However,

more and more organizations and journalists create such kinds of projects. For example, the travel podcast Skol (Skol', 2021) shows a good start, which can successfully develop. Still, because of the war in Ukraine, the author was forced to freeze the project, but in July 2022 resumed work and recorded a new episode with the current social and political information, revealing the topic of forced relocation and the arrangement of Ukrainian refugees in Scandinavian countries.

Another rapidly developing area is *integrated marketing communications*, which contribute to the promotion of video content, and interactive programs as a new form of behavior is already a habit, so in our opinion, soon, we can see even more activity and development in the field of digital.

"There is a convergence process of marketing and public relations in the practical sphere of their application. If marketing and PR departments were separate in many business companies, and there were disputes about the division of roles between public relations and marketing,

now marketing would continue to actively penetrate PR during the development and implementation of positioning strategies. And PR specialists will increasingly use such marketing tools as SEO and SMM. Marketing promotion methods, marketing tools, and principles of working with target audiences are increasingly used in the field of social communication and are useful in the work of PR managers" (Berezenko, & Kerymov, 2020)

Complex integrated marketing communications - the whole complex of marketing communications: advertising, sales promotion, personal sales, propaganda, and publications, which are in constant interaction between themselves, the company, and between the company and its external and internal environment (Panchenko, 2020). This type of marketing is focused on the product and the consumer, simultaneously involving all communication channels; accordingly, it is advantageous and convenient for the company to affect all exciting parts in cooperation with one campaign or action. A distinctive feature of this kind of interaction is managers' rapid feedback and flexible response, correcting the next steps in the tactics and strategy of the action. In addition, diversified activities aimed at different audiences help improve the overall assessment of the result. Most of the interviewed PR experts noted that they had integrated marketing activities. It is necessary to be prepared for new things to understand clearly and monitor constantly the reputational risks and respond quickly to emerging challenges.

Among the features characteristic of creating an integrated marketing case, the survey participants noted the holistic approach to this kind of project, including consistency, analytical mindset, focus, erudition, and flexibility in decision-making.

From Ukrainian practice as a case study can be rendered the opening ceremony of the shopping center Nikolsky in Kharkiv, where a series of events were organized with a comprehensive approach: for the media - a press conference, tour of the facility, participation in VIP events; for business partners - VIP-zone with the network, a concert program, and catering service; for visitors - raffles, entertainment, light show, and fireworks. After the opening, questionnaires, surveys, and statistics were conducted, which allowed us to estimate the event for each audience group and correct the plan for other events (Opening of the shopping, 2021).

Thus, the respondents' opinion correlates with the statement that creating a set of integrated communications is a complex process that requires a significant amount of background information, knowledge, and experience of the executors. Moreover, the experts noted that today the complexity of marketing communications is becoming more complex, as the active development of digital marketing, the hybrid format of events, and new methods and techniques of professional work are constantly expanding the range of tools.

The dynamics of the development of the PR market, as well as all other spheres, were abruptly stopped by the

beginning of the military aggression of Russia against Ukraine. Business, as the driving force of the economy and development of the country, has now, since February 2022, been under challenging conditions. According to the European Business Association, in March 2022, about 60% of businesses stopped or did not work, and more than 70% of companies stopped operating. "As of early June, 47% of Ukrainian companies are operating at full capacity, 50% are operating with some restrictions or only partially" (Business during the War, 2022). "You can look at business in context, and now it is depressing. There is no answer to the question of where we are now, neither politicians nor the world community, yet." (Derevjanko, 2022).

From the experts' observations, we can assume that businesses that have resumed operations require more local outreach, and some companies are more active via the Internet. Moreover, humanity and expanded social responsibility are among the priorities in work. Thus, businesses are trying to be responsible for their employees, be proactive and be a reliable stakeholder for the army, the military, society, and the state.

If we look at the maximum recorded historical minimum in the development of Ukrainian society, the economic crisis of 2007-2008 - is a situation that can be partly compared with today. We can compare the trends of those years and the problem of our time and discuss that public relations, at least, will return to a similar level of work: "one specialist is responsible for all components of PR-activity, chooses free tools, so-called hand-made PR, and moves slowly, solving today's problems without a serious strategic plan" (Derevjanko, 2022).

More optimistic forecasts are for the IT companies that are not tied to the local market and develop on line with global trends. However, it is worth recalling that most of the tools in this area are related to Internet marketing and integrated marketing communications.

### Conclusion

To summarize, we argue that digitalization has become a noticeable influence on all areas of communication and is a leading development trend for all types of activities and public relations, not only in Ukraine but also in the world.

Quantitative and qualitative data analysis demonstrates the steady dynamics of digitalization of the PR industry. However, this form of communication is not yet entirely comfortable compared to the offline format due to more effective personal perception and interaction in some sectors and market segments. However, the circumstances of recent years: the pandemic, lockdown, and war in Ukraine, contributed to the development of this particular format of communication most of all. With the outbreak of war, the tried-and-true online form helps maintain contact and hold the necessary events as much as possible.

Digitalization also contributes to the active development of all areas of digital marketing, changing

the toolkit to online or hybrid events, introducing new communication channels with a maximum of video content, and supplementing the usual actions with various related events and interactive communication, which suits the prevailing conditions. For example, typical information messages for the press - press releases become smaller in volume but contain more relevant information and are distributed not only through the database of journalists but also in groups of social networks and messengers, changing the perception of the established forms and communication channels. The increasing virtualization is also giving a new impetus, especially since the current transformation of the social network Facebook into the Meta universe allows virtually any user to experience many new things. In the online world, people can work, play and communicate, often using augmented reality helmets in the worlds where their favorite movie characters or book and game characters live.

Perhaps the PR market will become even more integrated into the context of social media.

Transmission and dissemination of information in long-term projects are increasing. Emphasis is more on establishing trust relationships, through their own social media channels, with the help of bloggers and Influencers, bringing exclusivity, personal brand, and reputation as a unique asset, bringing profit and audience loyalty. Accordingly, the new approach requires more thorough work in reputation management and a crisis - even a comprehensive development of an anti-crisis PR project. Most respondents also believe that such measures are more likely to be long-term. Since March 2022, this trend has received a new impetus for development, reshaping groups of people and society by opinions, critical criteria, and new productivity.

The traditional set of PR tools is changing again. With the expansion of the field of public relations due to the growth of Internet activity and the emergence of successful cases of integrated marketing communications, it is worth paying more attention to the creative component and creative ideas. Thanks to market research, there is more clarity in such actions' intermediate and final results. It is also possible to quickly make changes in PR campaigns. The consistency of the approach also contributes to achieving the goals and helps to concentrate resources and activities in the best ratio. Since the IT sector demonstrates the most stable development in the frames of world tendencies, their experience will probably be an essential reference point for local companies soon.

Personification as a communicative strategy is about personal values, instead of advertising, constructed characters. It raises the importance of collaboration and influence marketing, which interacts with real people.

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Western collaboration models are more common and structured in Western practice, unlike Ukrainian tradition.

We can also assume that personal PR and eco-PR will become more popular.

The study also showed that, on the one hand, there is a trend toward global virtualization. But on the other hand, opinions of real people are becoming practical, i.e., personalized content that engages the consumers' audience and helps them choose a product or increase loyalty to it more effectively.

Many trends confirm that modern PR eliminates several stereotypes and stamps, such as post-congratulations with holidays, traditional formats of events, and learning to see the activity of the PR department and the company in a new way.

With the outbreak of hostilities in Ukraine, PR, as a direction of long-term business vision, was in more challenging conditions than other departments of companies. However, the situation when local companies reduce and Western companies continue to use tools for public relations, as well as the whole Ukrainian society is involved in PR support of the country, can give impetus to a new round of development of the profession.

Thus, public relations specialists should pay attention to the necessary skills, which may dictate by trends, among which, in addition to professional competencies, stand out ICT skills and some social skills, integrated and systematic development. They will allow the harmonious development and competent participation in the development of PR - projects and PR direction in general.

The analysis also showed a high level of growth in digitalization and interest in the development of reputation management. You should note that in Ukrainian practice, there are more examples of media introducing new formats, but there are fewer changes in the context of the materials.

Representatives of companies reveal little interest in changes in the press service as a trend. Perhaps, this is because such a specialized press department is rarely seen in the business environment and more typical for political structures or large global non-profit public organizations.

In general, we can assume that despite all challenges of time, many of the trends highlighted by experts will continue to be relevant, respectively. Therefore, it is worth paying attention to their further development and study cases to work to implement practical projects using effective PR and marketing communications.

It is also worth considering these trends within the structure of European and global PR, as they are often similar. However, you should note such features as the flexibility and creativity of the national market, which adapt general trends to local conditions and help to understand the market deeper.

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