THE IPSOS REPUTATION COUNCIL

Findings from the Fifteenth Sitting
– Exploring the latest thinking and practice in corporate reputation management from across the world

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GAME CHANGERS

About the Ipsos Reputation Council

Established in 2009, the Ipsos Reputation Council brings together senior communicators from some of the most respected corporations in the world.

The Reputation Council's mission is to increase the understanding of the issues and challenges facing communicators in the corporate environment, as well as capturing expert views on key trends, issues and events in the wider world. Each sitting of the Reputation Council provides a definitive guide to the latest thinking and practice in the corporate communications world. The fifteenth sitting of the Reputation Council involved 147 senior corporate communicators based in 13 different global markets.

Thank you to our Reputation Council members for contributing to our latest edition – without your participation this report would not have been possible.

147 interviews were conducted with Reputation Council members between February 2021 and May 2021, either by telephone or video call.

THE IPSOS REPUTATION COUNCIL
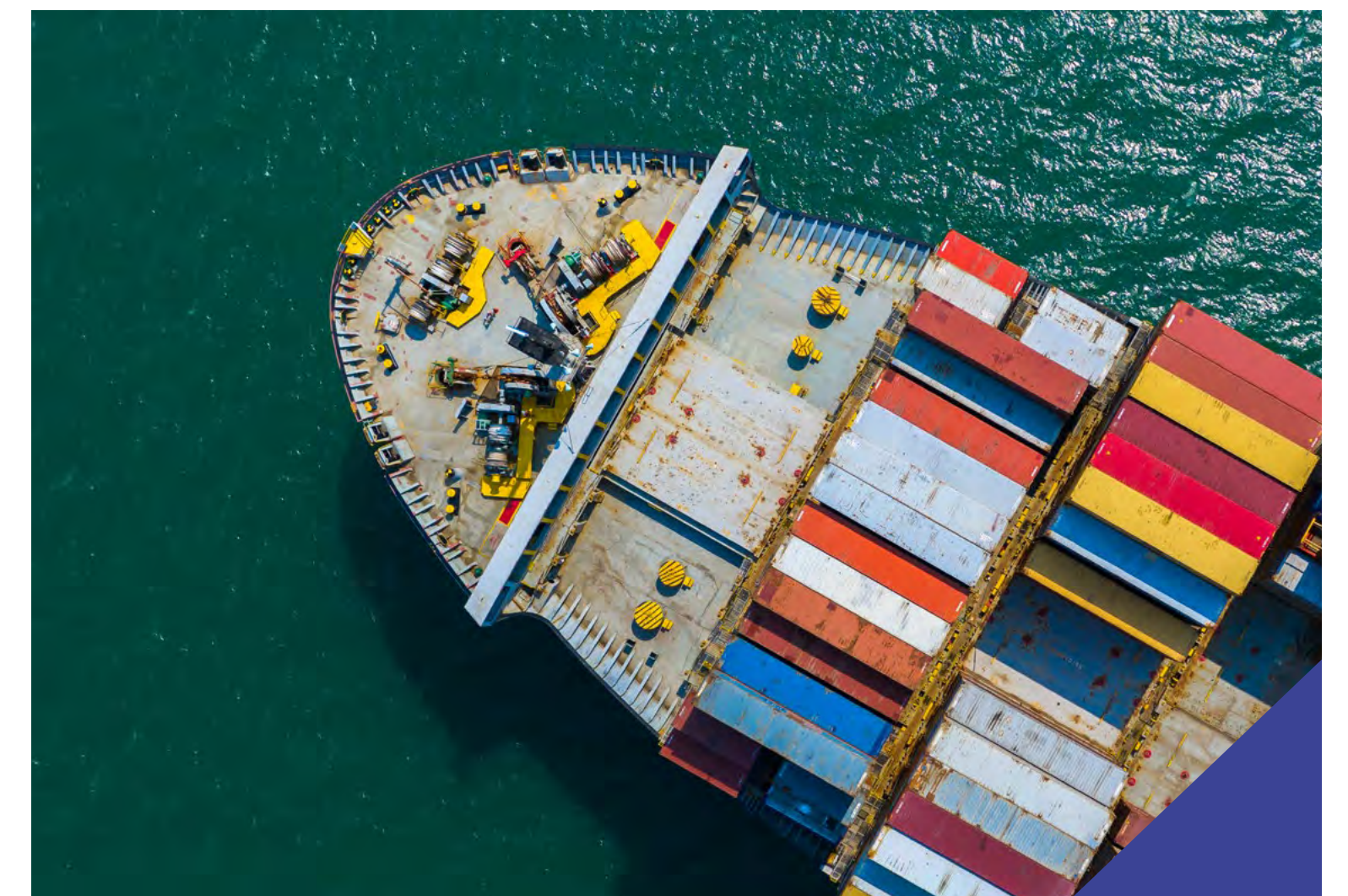
Findings from the Fifteenth Sitting

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Welcome to the latest briefing from the Ipsos Reputation Council

This, our fifteenth sitting, includes the opinions and views from over 147 senior corporate communicators representing 13 markets around the world.

The Greek philosopher Heraclitus said, "Change is the only constant in life." And in many ways, this is the focus for this year's Reputation Council Report, as preconceptions about the world of work and society have been turned upside down.

From a corporate perspective COVID-19, climate change and the ability of technology to inform and empower individuals have had a major impact on companies and how they operate in society. We therefore decided to ask Council members how they were addressing specific communication challenges emanating from these powerful themes.

Our report explores issues such as the role of a company in a global pandemic, including how organisations can demonstrate behaviours that are aligned to the needs of employees as well as society. And very much linked to this, we asked Council members how they viewed the evolution of stakeholder expectations around ethical behaviour and how corporate performance in this area could impact both license to operate as well as the bottom line. We specifically wanted to hear their thoughts on the emergence of ESG and how it was being integrated into business strategy, corporate planning and key priorities such as Diversity and Inclusion.

We also explore the changing nature of Internal Communications in a world where many employees are working from home. What does employee engagement look like now? How do companies nurture and motivate their people when remote working seems to be the norm in so many areas? Council members give us their thoughts on how they have approached this major cultural change.

Another area that is rightly reaching the attention of the CEO as well as the corporate communicator is that of responsible Supply Chain management. This once low-profile aspect of corporate activity is now firmly under the stakeholder spotlight as demands for greater transparency increase. Indeed, the commercial landscape is littered with companies that have suffered reputational damage and business loss by not taking the stewardship of the Supply Chain seriously.

Finally, in many ways what emerges from this report is a picture of the future company. It's one where business strategy and societal expectations are increasingly intertwined. Where traditional hierarchies and communication processes are giving way to a more inclusive, transparent and collaborative approach. Where the dividing line between external and internal communications is increasingly blurred and where the role of the corporate communicator as a strategic advisor has never been so important.

" In many ways what emerges from this report is a picture of the future company "

Milorad Ajder
Global Service Line Leader
Ipsos Corporate Reputation

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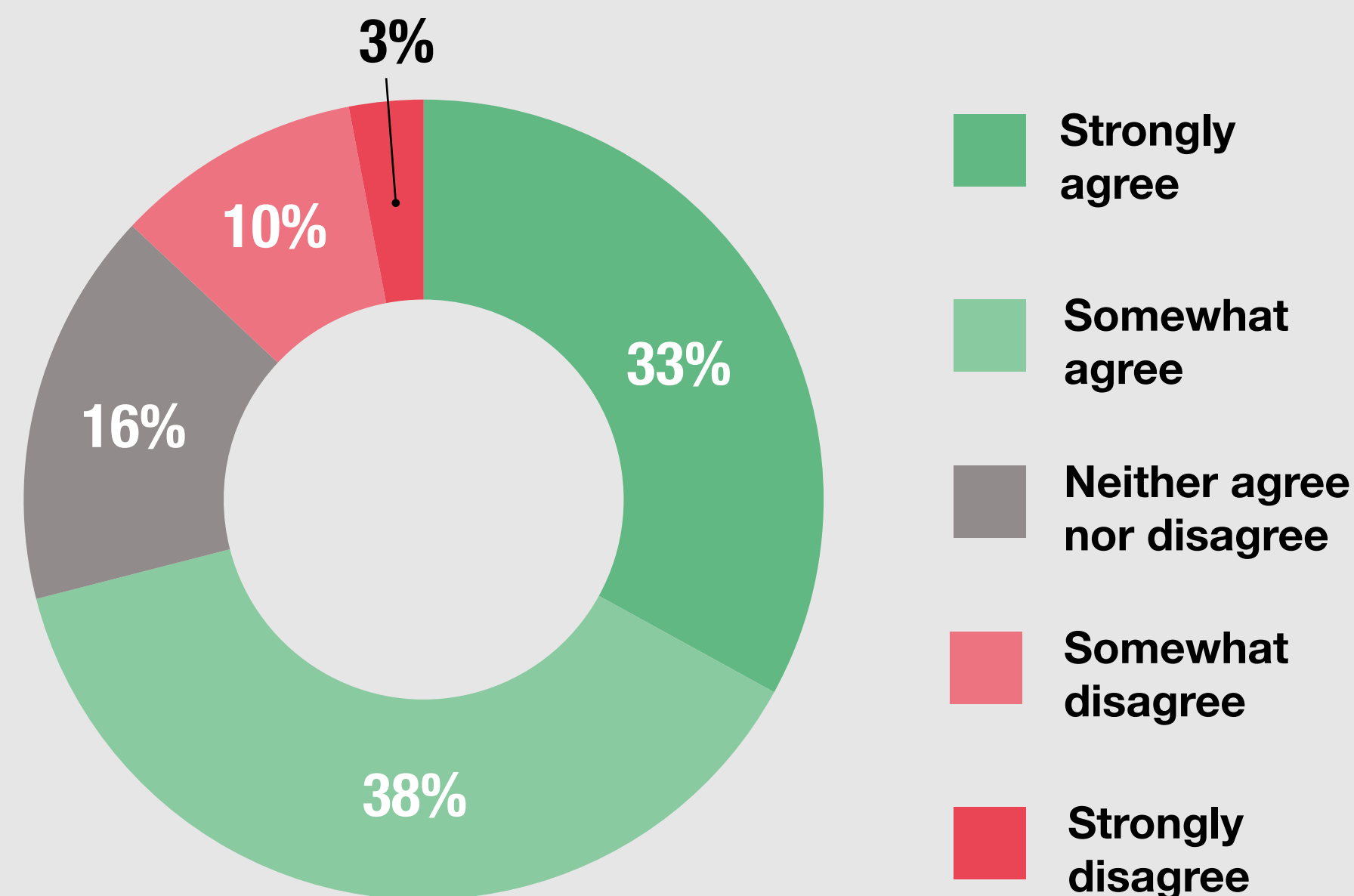# COVID-19

THE ROLE OF CORPORATE PURPOSE IN A PANDEMIC

What is the role of the corporation in society? Can a business be purposeful and still make a profit? This has been one of the knottiest issues for business leaders in recent years – exemplified by the US Business Roundtable's 'Statement on the Purpose of a Corporation' in August 2019.

In the midst of the first COVID-19 wave, a Council member told us *"it would be greatly encouraging to see*

" The response to COVID-19 has aligned well with companies trying to find a balance between business priorities and wider societal need "

A leading role for business

7 in 10 Council members say yes, the business community has taken a lead in tackling COVID-19.

3%

10%

16%

33%

38%

- **Strongly agree**
- **Somewhat agree**
- **Neither agree nor disagree**
- **Somewhat disagree**
- **Strongly disagree**

Base: 79

a lasting recalibration of business with society, where companies play a more hands-on role in helping to tackle real societal need, as we have been seeing through the pandemic.”

A year on, what's the verdict? Is the pandemic proving a watershed for business' role in the wider community? Or are we seeing another example of the say-do gap – what critics have labelled COVID-washing, or pand-empathy?

A leading role for business

7 in 10 Council members say yes, the business community has taken a lead in tackling COVID-19. To begin with, this meant businesses reacting quickly to manage the impact on their

own people. Safety, well-being and of course jobs were the priority:

“We were an essential business so our priority was always our employees and the safety and well-being of our teams. That required us to step up and lead in a way that we haven't pushed before. We reinforced from the CEO down in terms of how to respond, how to react during a pandemic. From our perspective, it was a leadership opportunity.”

This is a reminder that many firms have had to put wider societal ambitions 'on the back burner', in favour of basic business continuity:

“It is not their role to take charge. Companies have organised

themselves to deal with the pandemic internally, but have not taken the lead externally."

At the same time, Council members take pride in the agility with which they 'pivoted' their operations:

"The fact that the business community was able to turn on a dime like that and react, get everyone home, and figure out new business models quickly is remarkable."

It's also striking that in many countries, the public have consistently rated the COVID-19 response of businesses (and especially their own employers) very positively – often in stark contrast to ratings for their national governments.

Character gets revealed in a crisis

Council members from around the world cite examples of businesses 'stepping up to the plate' – individually, at a sector level, or through public/ private partnerships:

- Manufacturers, brewers and FMCG companies rapidly re-purposing to deliver hand sanitiser, PPE and other essential equipment.

- Financial services firms relaxing lending criteria.

- Restaurants and grocers branching out into home delivery and *"businesses being willing to call up*

people that might not be tech savvy enough to go online and thereby literally take your order for grocery shopping via the phone."

- Support for food banks and other philanthropy – e.g. the Seamos Uno campaign in Argentina.

- Consultancy and mentoring for suppliers.

- New supply chain processes to deal with stock-hording.

And above all, the era-defining vaccine response of the life sciences sector.

For some, the defining theme of the pandemic has been competition giving way to collaboration. But will this last?

"The pandemic has massively disrupted our sector in an industry where the prevailing environment is a hugely competitive one and it has given way to a really strong sense of collaboration and cooperation and you've seen companies coming together to solve community problems."

Of course, decisive government policy and strong public institutions have been critical. Some describe business' role as 'a supporting actor, rather than the lead actor'. But this supporting actor does have a unique skill-set:

"That's been a huge part in demonstrating, if government can create enabling policies, and for the most part get out of the way,

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businesses can innovate, drive, and problem solve at scale faster than any other organisation on the planet."

A new era of corporate activism, or back to basics?

Back in 2020, just 1 in 5 (19%) Council members believed it should be the job of government, not business, to fix society's problems. It's too early to say for sure whether COVID-19 has accelerated this trend towards corporate activism, or forced leaders to hunker down around the commercial basics:

"This notion of stakeholder capitalism has clearly become a bigger part of the mix. COVID-19 responses have fit well into that framework of companies trying to find this balance between strong continued shareholder return and also trying to address big societal challenges."

> **❝ 7 in 10 Council members say the business community has taken a lead in tackling COVID-19 ❞**

Maybe the lesson from COVID-19 is something we knew all along. During tough times, our commitment to a bigger purpose will be judged not by what we say, but by what we do:

"There was a general tendency to take matters into our own hands, to try to offer tangible situations without making big communication proclamations, something very concrete. There was also a tendency on the part of consumers to want to give weight to actions rather than communications, that was another thing that the pandemic amplified."

❝ **The fact that the business community was able to turn on a dime like that and react, get everyone home, and figure out new business models quickly is remarkable** ❞

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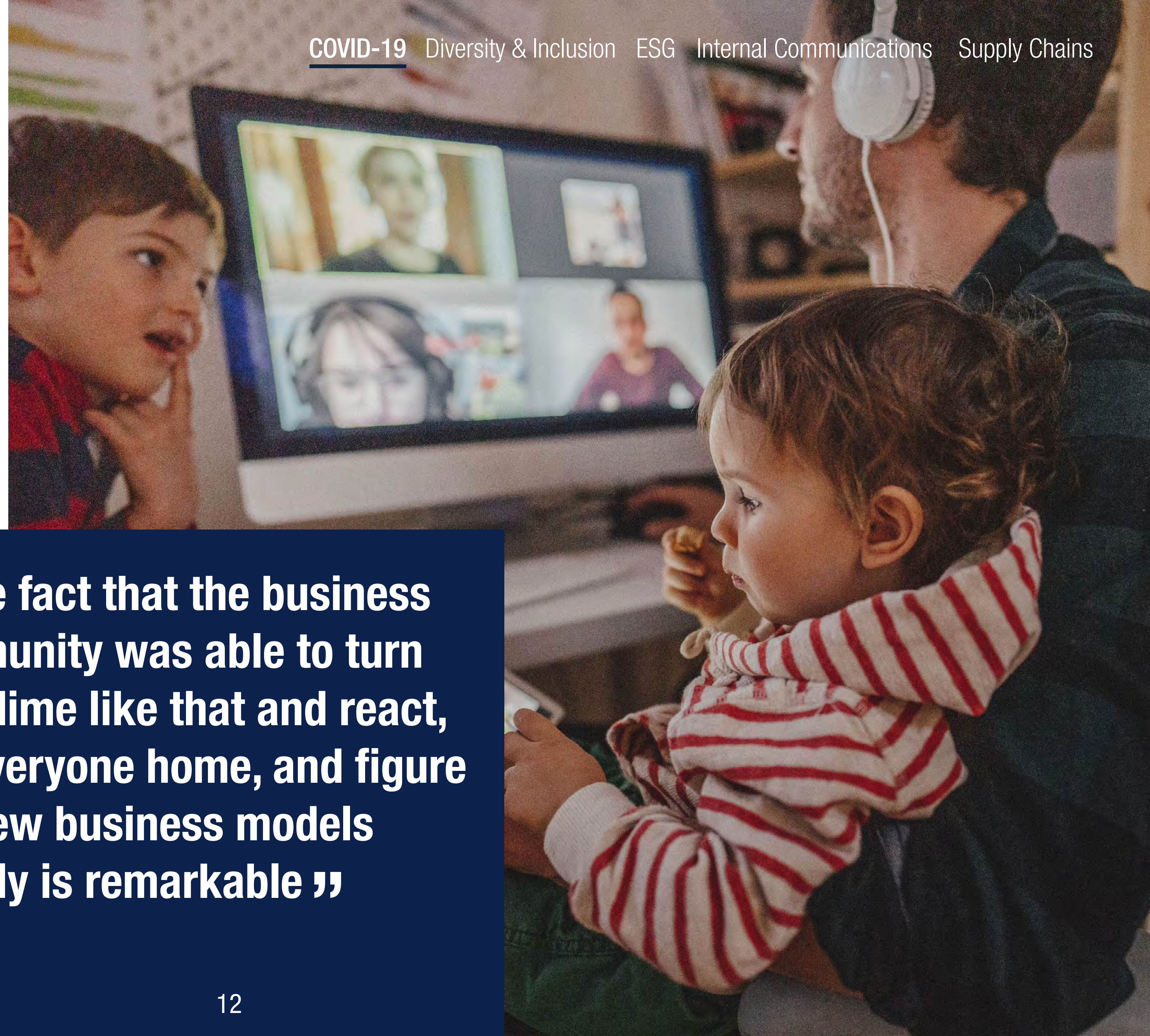
COMMUNICATING IN THE EYE OF THE STORM

The impact of COVID-19 on the communications function

COVID-19 is unlike anything businesses have had to confront before – and communications leaders have been front-and-centre in the corporate response. Indeed, four out of five Council members say the pandemic has had a profound impact on their team or function. One Council

> **" Our role as the counsel for the business… has made us more important than ever…we are the steady hand on a ship that's in really rough waters "**

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member notes *"there is nothing that we now do that hasn't changed as a result of COVID-19."*

Some Council members say this impact rated a '5' in the early days of the pandemic, before downgrading to a '3 or 4' in 2021 as the comms function adapted to the new normal. However, for others the psychological impact of fatigue and uncertainty – as well as workload – have increased over time.

The primacy of internal comms

Initially, comms teams went into crisis mode – activating contingency plans and, above all, looking after their own people:
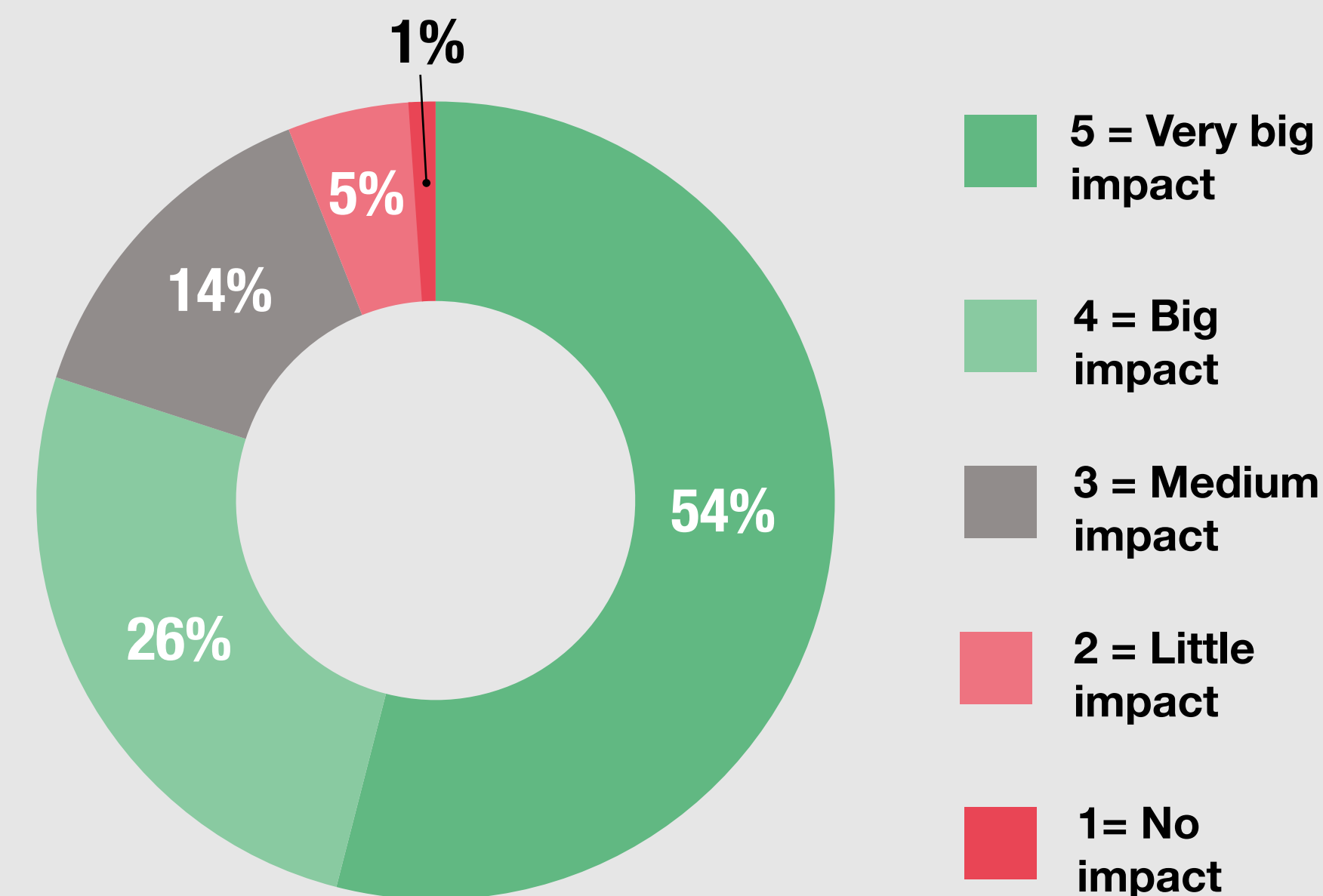
"90% of the plans we made for 2020 went out the door and our focus was trying to take care of people."

This meant a re-focus on internal comms: helping employees to deal with the reality of remote working, insecurity or even furlough – along with a myriad of personal challenges such as, a lack of suitable working space or equipment, or childcare. Some Council members even found issues such as IT security appearing in their in-tray.

"I think internal communications is where I have seen the biggest change. A huge increase in the focus around well-being, once you have got over the initial getting people out of the office and working from home."

Employee engagement

Four out of five Council members say the COVID-19 pandemic has greatly impacted their team or function.

- 5 = Very big impact
- 4 = Big impact
- 3 = Medium impact
- 2 = Little impact
- 1 = No impact

1%
5%
14%
54%
26%

Base: 125

" There is nothing that we now do that hasn't changed as a result of COVID-19 "

Some perceive this as a further breakdown of the traditional delineation between internal and external comms:

"It's no longer siloed by audience because our employees were obviously one of our number one audiences and there was no way to differentiate between what the different audiences needed."

This has also reinforced a trend which Council members have seen for some time – employee well-being rising up the comms agenda and playing a bigger role in employer branding.

Tech to the rescue

"With COVID-19 it was like living in 2026 but we experienced it in 2021 or 2020." The pandemic has, of course, triggered a huge acceleration in tech-enabled virtual comms – both internal and external. Council members see both upsides and downsides to this trend. On the plus side, virtual

engagement can be more efficient, with the potential to reach far more people, more frequently:

"Some good has emerged from this, too. At the forum we held last year in Japan, speakers participated in person while general consumers participated remotely. 2,500 people participated which was beyond our expectations. It has become easier to reach the wider public."

But some bemoan a loss of the 'softer arts' of communication – essential for building customer or stakeholder relationships, especially in their early stages:

"It is OK if you have already well-established relationships with

stakeholders but if you want to nurture a relationship that has almost been put on ice… So, I would say new external stakeholder relationship building, that has been a big impact."

Elevating leadership

Council members have played a key role in supporting their leadership teams, as their priorities and profiles changed almost overnight:

"The visibility and accessibility of our leaders has been the real win here. The feedback we have had from our stakeholders shows that they believe that our communications have improved because of this."

80%

of Council members say that COVID-19 has had a high impact on their team or function

They have also been uniquely placed to advise leaders on matters of 'reputation legacy':

"Our CEO, at the very beginning said 'let's just focus on our look-back reputation' and what he meant by that was at the end of this, whenever that is, we must ensure that this is the company that people recognise supported them through this situation, whether that be with our employees or whether that be our partners, customers, communities or all of our stakeholders in one capacity or another."

For some, this has led to a greater appreciation of the comms function among the C-Suite: *"It is one of those*

functions that in the heat of battle you really realise how much you need it."

A spotlight on ESG

Some Council members view COVID-19 as a wake-up call for businesses. As we explore in this article it has thrust the 'S' of ESG into the spotlight, as corporates have been challenged to show how they contribute net benefit to society. In combination with the growing climate emergency, the pandemic has accelerated the rise of the ESG agenda:

"As people started to do things differently and see the world in a different way, it was a heightened awareness by our consumers,

customers, and employees. Even if you didn't believe in climate change, it was a physical demonstration of the fragility of people and businesses. In that sense, it accelerated some things. It was a great way to get people to pay attention to things like climate change more and things like diversity, equity, and inclusion. It was a strange wake-up call."

A lasting legacy for communicators?

COVID-19 has propelled the communications function into the spotlight as never before. It has shown that no other part of the business is as well-equipped to safeguard all

the relationships, emerging issues and agendas that matter most to a business during times of turbulence:

"Our role as the counsel for the business, the conscience of the company and really the soul of the company has made us more important than ever… we are the steady hand on a ship that's in really rough waters and we can help with how we communicate with customers, to employees, to external stakeholders, to shareholders, to everyone."

02

Diversity & Inclusion

CAN COMPANIES REALLY WALK THE TALK?

After a year in which issues of diversity and inclusion (D&I) have shot into the spotlight worldwide, most Reputation Council members agree that development in this area has become an imperative for the modern organisation. However, this poses unique challenges for communications leaders.

Almost all Council members – 96% – agree that 'companies benefit from embracing D&I', while just 1 in 10

96%

of Council members agree that companies benefit from embracing D&I

believe that 'it is the role of government, not business, to tackle issues of D&I'. Clearly Council members feel that the case for corporate leadership on D&I – and the benefits of doing so – are now rock-solid.

This reinforces previous Reputation Council studies, which showed corporate communicators being strongly committed to progressive social agendas.

Council members acknowledge that progress is being made – in how these topics are talked about, how frequently, and by whom. Where opinions diverge is on how much action has been taken, and therefore how much of this progress has been tangible. Many Council members

believe that their organisations have made great strides, while others cite a stubborn disparity between what is being said and what is being done.

While gender equality is by far the most mentioned aspect of D&I, and most likely to be used as an example of improvement, there are other important aspects of the debate that are less prevalent – either because they are lower priority or because organisations are still in a learning state.

"There is often a lot of talk and not much substance, so we talk about diversity and inclusion, but in fact older employees are fired because they are old, I have seen a lot of this happening in my life."

The challenges of D&I engagement

Part of the challenge with communication around the D&I agenda is that it is such a fast-moving, multi-faceted area. While there is growing consensus around its 'core' agenda, there is still debate and uncertainty about how far and how fast companies should move beyond this. One Council member differentiates between 'standard' and 'un-standard' aspects of D&I:

"STANDARD: people of racial, religious, sexual diversity to be seen at ALL levels of the organisation, reflective of the communities we operate in… UNSTANDARD: do

you have diversity of thought? Do you create inclusive space? Are you listening to your introverts as much as your extroverts? There will continually be under-served areas, and it will be endless. Do you eventually draw the line and say, 'that's enough for now, we're diverse enough' or do you keep pushing for more?"

This issue is heightened by different stakeholder expectations between countries, cultures and even sectors. At the same time, D&I objectives don't exist in a vacuum – Council members describe the practical challenges of overlaying these new priorities onto existing structures:

"You can say you want to get to

" Council member opinion is split on how much tangible D&I progress has been made "

25% representation in this group in our employee base, but you don't have 25% empty seats so how are you going to get from A to B? There are some really difficult questions to be answered. Obviously, you can change the way you recruit but particularly the more senior you get the narrower the target."

For some Council members, the

challenge of effecting real change in D&I encapsulates the old saying that *"culture eats strategy for breakfast"*:

"Companies live by numbers because a business would, so they try to impact the numbers. But inclusion isn't about numbers, it's about deep cultural change and that's where the rubber really hits the road."

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Fear of saying the wrong thing

Council members believe that societal expectations around D&I mean that disengagement is not an option: four in five (81%) agree that the public now expects companies to take action. But at the same time, three in five (62%) believe businesses are worried about engaging with D&I, for fear of saying the wrong thing.

This fear is driven by a number of factors:

1. **The say-do gap.** Communicators are worried that by taking a public stance on these topics, their organisation risks being called out

for hypocrisy or inauthenticity if its own standards fall short:

"It is more important for companies to act and then say, versus say and then act. It is important for companies to have a position and to do something, whether you make that public or not is immaterial for me, it is more important that you do. Behaviour first, talk later."

Again, this echoes the view from previous Reputation Council research that too many businesses still use the language of social purpose, without committing to real change. Sometimes, this may be driven by an authentic desire to speak out on emerging social

issues, without a clear sense of what are priority areas, or areas on which your business has a genuine 'licence to speak':

"True diversity, inclusion, and belonging recognises the richness and value that it brings a company and helps achieve goals. That should not be controversial. Where

it gets tricky in companies is if you over-index on emerging issues."

2. **Fear of a severe backlash.** D&I is recognised for being a highly politicised and culturally sensitive issue, so the potential to offend is greater. This means that business leaders have to be clear about their commitments, and if

necessary defend them against vociferous critics:

"We're a pretty progressive company so we've tackled that head on, knowing that we may say something that someone isn't fully on board with or may even be offended by, but we want people to have the conversation. A lot of other companies out there, especially those that aren't as progressive, are definitely afraid of that and are struggling with that."

3. **The knowledge gap.** As with many social issues, D&I is a complex subject, where the discourse moves at a fast pace. Council members recognise this and acknowledge that even where intentions are

good, there is a serious risk of not fully understanding all aspects of the issue:

"I don't think it's about saying something wrong, but more about the consequences that it may bring. The sudden backlash that may occur about the diversity and inclusion topics. I mean, the reason may be more because of ignorance rather than the fear of saying something wrong."

The principles of when – and when not – to 'take a stand', which Council members discussed in this earlier report are still very relevant.

Above all, make sure your own house is in order before speaking publicly:

81%

of Council members agree that the public now expects companies to take action on D&I

"If companies aren't ready and haven't thought it through, they should be cautious about making bold declarations and looking to grab headlines. If it's about changing your workforce, it should come out organically."

And, as much as possible, align words with deeds, and ensure those actions are relevant to your own business:

"You shouldn't get over your skis. You must be able to live by what you say. If you have areas where values do not align with actions you have to be prepared. You better damn well make sure actions are aligned!"

62%

of Council members agree businesses are worried about engaging with diversity and inclusion issues for fear of saying the wrong thing

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What does this mean for D&I communications in the future?

Ultimately, Council members recognise there is a clear benefit to embracing D&I – and that companies must have plans in place to engage with this agenda. They suggest, however, that before they talk, there is a need to learn and build a body of knowledge on D&I that draws on input from both internal and external stakeholders:

"The increase of being able to have a two-way dialogue and therefore listen… You don't make assumptions about how good your gender pay gap is, or how good you are at inclusion and diversity, you listen to your associates and you let them tell you whether you are achieving what you think you are achieving."

Last year, Council members told us that businesses still spend too much time broadcasting and not enough time listening. Above all, when it comes to D&I the most successful communicators will perhaps be those who are best at listening and engaging:

"Not every lane of the D&I highway works for everyone. Companies, corporations, institutions should understand those lanes, which ones their stakeholders care the most about, which ones they can make the most change in, and focus on those. Because focusing on all of them is going to get you in trouble."

THE COMMUNICATIONS CHALLENGES OF BLACK LIVES MATTER

For corporate communicators, Black Lives Matter (BLM) exemplifies the unique challenge posed by the growing expectation for companies to take a stance on issues of D&I. Most Reputation Council members (81%) agree that the public expect them to take a stand on D&I issues, yet a notably smaller proportion (62%) agree that it's appropriate to take a public

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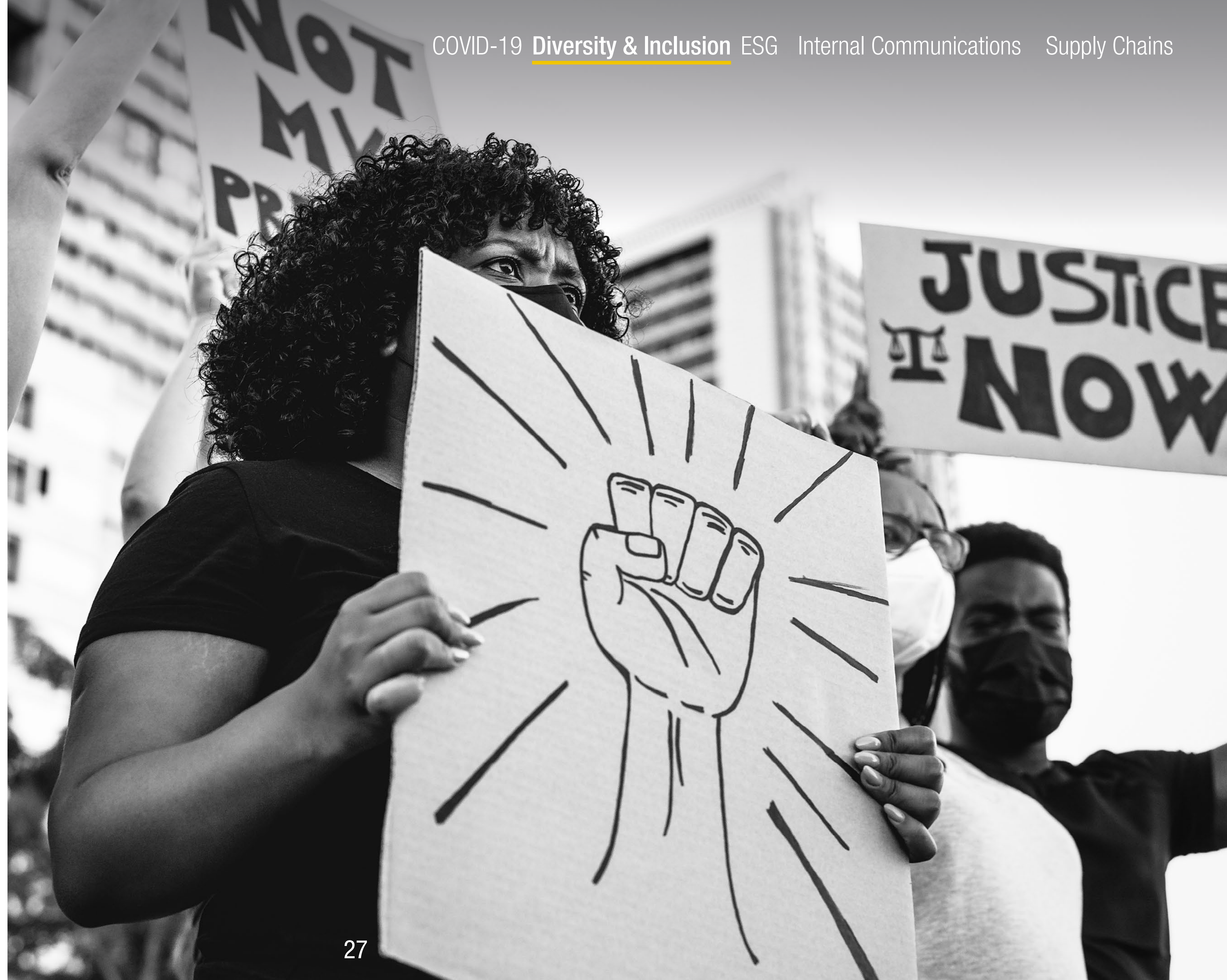
stance on BLM. Fear of saying the wrong thing (62% of Council members cite this) is clearly a driving factor, but the issue is much more complex than just knowing what to say – with a number of intertwined considerations being raised in our interviews with Council members this year.

"Black Lives Matter, which started in the US, was a global issue and prompted the need for businesses to kind of breathe and think about how to respond."

Navigating such complex topics can at times result in communications that miss the mark or perhaps don't marry up with the track record of a business. Several companies have fallen foul to external scrutiny here, highlighting

that good intentions alone are no longer sufficient and must be backed up by evidence of action or a clear plan on where progress will be made. Depending on where organisations are on this journey, communicators face the question of whether the focus of messaging should be internal or external. Evidence here suggests that the internal and external must be very closely aligned; but first organisations must have a strong internal message and program, before entering the external environment.

"The S [of ESG] is the one that has been topical over the last year because of Black Lives Matter and forced labour in supply chains. It is a huge opportunity; companies need to be held accountable."

Council members see D&I as *"an opportunity to drive change"* and have used internal communications to drive this change in their business models – ultimately positioning BLM as an element of ESG. Other members approach the topic based on context of the environment in which they operate. This has led to some questioning the relevance of BLM as an agenda item for a company operating in a part of the world where it is not a focus.

"With Black Lives Matter, there was huge pressure for our CEO to come out and say something internally, not externally. We were like, no. why would he? It is fine if Tim Cook at Apple wants to do that, he is an American CEO of an American company, it is very different for us."

The task then for corporate communicators is understanding how to respond to public desire in a meaningful way, while also staying true to a strategy that best addresses the company's needs over the short and long term. More so than ever before, communicators are being required to be the *"counsel for the business, to act as the conscience of the company."* For many this requires going beyond weighing up the immediate opportunities and risks – instead making decisions to build a reputation that aligns with the values of future generations.

It is clear there are complexities to communicating successfully on BLM, but the starting point must be a reflection on the relevance of the subject to each individual company. Communicators must ask the question: is this an issue that directly influences the operations of our business internally and/or externally? If so, communicating evidence of action and outcomes rather than sentiment can go a long way to addressing the fear of saying the wrong thing. As we consistently see across our reputation research, companies that begin with action and finish with communications end up winning in the long run.

> ❝ **We need a statement on BLM, to be a credible voice in the discussion** ❞

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A PERSPECTIVE FROM LATIN AMERICA

Despite governments and businesses around the world adopting an increasingly progressive stance, gender inequality is a problem that persists. Ipsos Global Advisor data shows that citizens around the world acknowledge this, with a third of the population worldwide citing gender inequality as a serious issue affecting their country.

In an environment where the pace of change has been slow, corporations

> **More than just a statement, in 2022 D&I must have its own taskforce and agenda**

are increasingly seen as a primary driver of progress. This mandate is recognised by Reputation Council members, with 81% of Council members agreeing that the public expect them to take a stance on issues of diversity and inclusion (D&I).

"We are facing a true challenge in this sense. We will double our workforce in 2021 and this is a key issue for us, we need to represent a broader society within our company in order to grow."

One of the primary challenges facing communicators in developing regions such as Latin America is that the public often feel there are other priorities. Economic and political turmoil usually monopolise headlines, while high

unemployment rates and informal labour are seen as more pressing than closing the gender pay gap.[1]

"It has a taskforce and an agenda of its own nowadays. It used to be a statement, but now companies are actually working on it."

Nevertheless, members across Latin America recognise that the need for more female leaders has now become imperative, a perception driven by statistics, showing that no more than 7% of board positions across the region's largest companies are held by women.[2]

"Above General Manager level, the balance is very skewed. Our challenge is to put more women in

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position and also provide mentoring. Men also can play a vital role by supporting these initiatives."

Reflecting the slow pace of change in years past, governments across Latin America have intervened and used regulation to kick start progress. There is currently legislation mandating gender quotas in Argentina (the first country to pass this act in 1991), Bolivia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, Dominican Republic, Uruguay, Brazil, El Salvador, Haiti, and Paraguay. Other countries have also passed legislation to help eradicate gender discrimination in the workplace.

"Companies are working in a more conscious and organised

way than governments on D&I, but it is true that governments are more advanced."

There are many voices against quotas and government intervention, with some arguing they are not addressing the root cause of the problem. Council members across both established and emerging economies highlight that there are structural challenges that need to be addressed to achieve gender balance in senior leadership roles, especially in industries where there aren't currently enough female graduates.
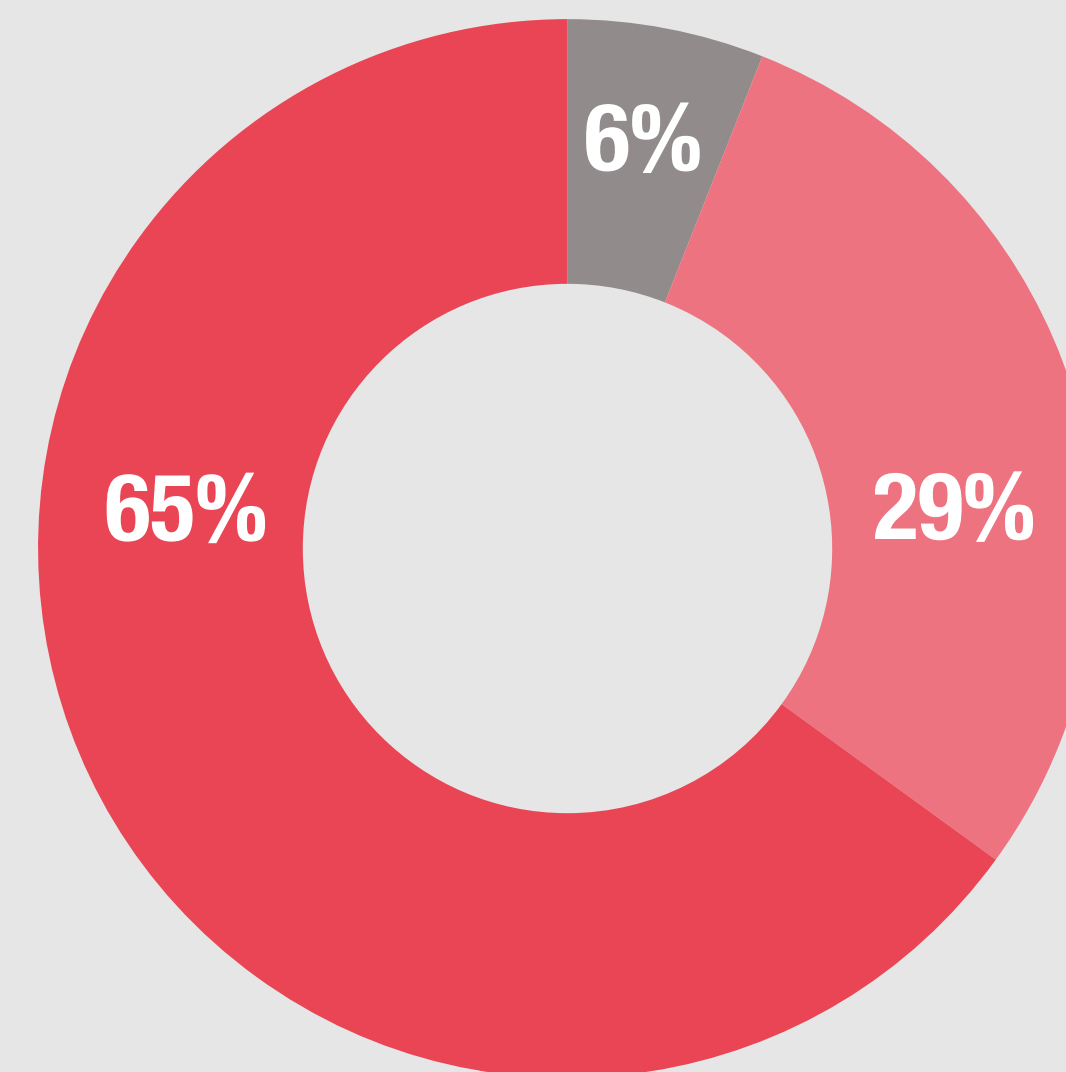
"The issue of diversity between men and women is a tightrope walk… structurally there are fewer female engineers."

"Women are still relegated from leadership roles, but I don't agree with having quotas, women should be incorporated in leadership roles on merit."

In recognition of such challenges, achieving gender equality across Latin America, and emerging economies more broadly will require significant investment at multiple levels of the education system and economy. Council members highlight that businesses are ready to support this process with the vast majority agreeing that governments are not the only ones responsible for tackling D&I – encouragingly the strongest agreement is recorded in emerging economies.
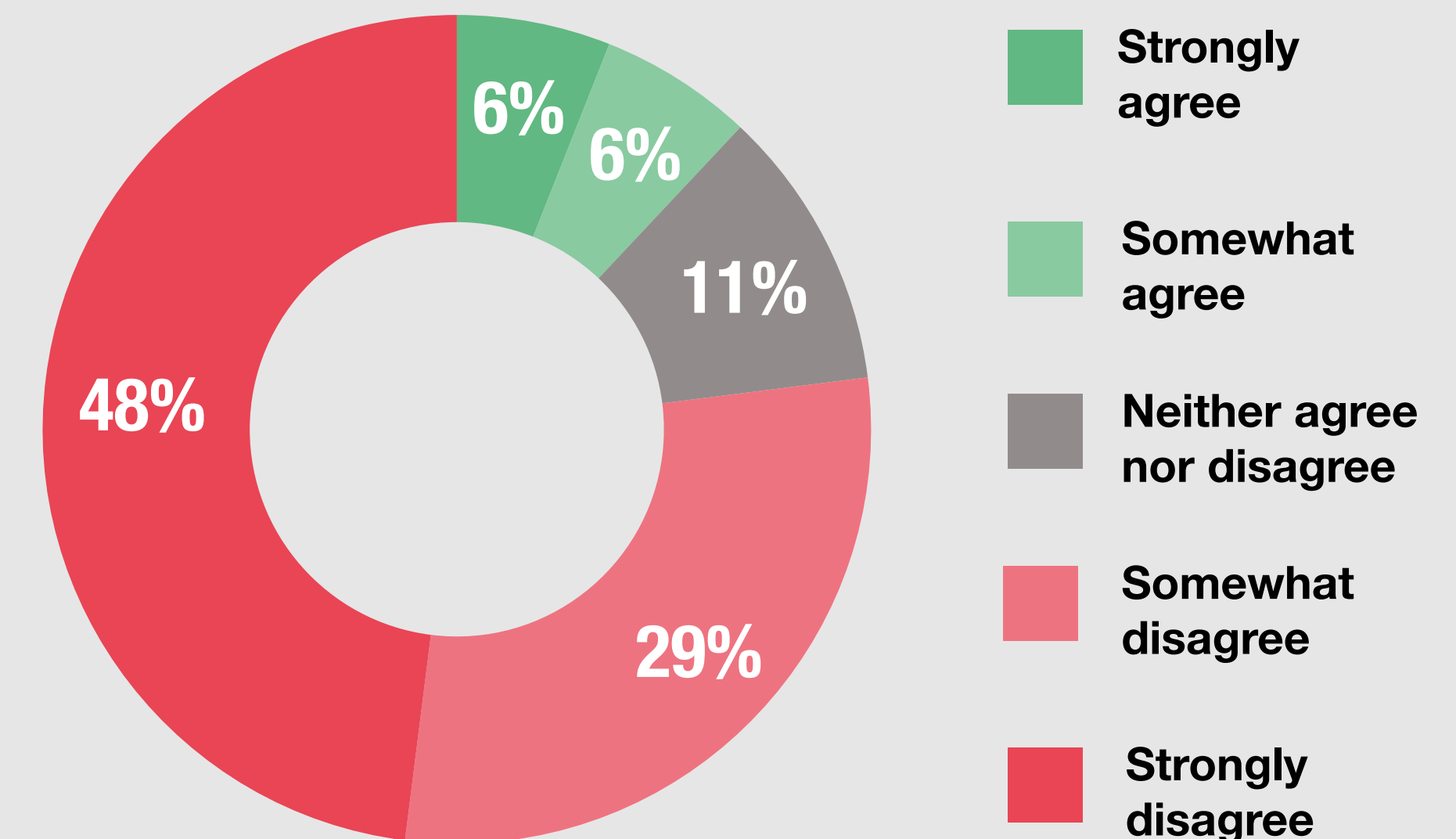
Is it the role of government, not business, to tackle D&I issues?

Emerging countries

65%
29%
6%

Base: 17 Council members

Established countries

6%
6%
11%
29%
48%

Base: 102 Council members

Strongly agree

Somewhat agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Somewhat disagree

Strongly disagree

33

"I think that there has been demand, in particular from the new generations, to express views openly in regards of these topics… this combination of supply and demand can lead to radical change."

With awareness and the motivation to take action growing around this issue, there is now an opportunity for companies across emerging economies to benefit by prioritising gender equality alongside other challenges. Communicators in such markets face a difficult balancing act in addressing long-term issues such as a D&I versus challenges that rightly or wrongly have a greater sense of immediacy.

In many respects, this issue is a heightened example of the classic conundrum communicators face in balancing proactive versus reactive communications. In this regard having a long-term vision for the organisation's purpose that reflects the values of future generations is essential. With corporations across emerging economies and the world more generally increasingly striving to align purpose with progressive values, there is now greater reason for optimism on the issue of gender equality than at any time before.

All quotes from Council members in emerging economies

03
ESG

NO TURNING BACK

For almost all business leaders, it is undeniable that ESG performance is of crucial importance today. This is driven by the expectations of external stakeholders – investors, media, NGOs – but also internally, as employees place greater emphasis on the behaviour and values of the organisations they work for:

"Nowadays ESG is vital for companies across the board. Concern within my company as it's inherent to activities. Strong growth everywhere: boards of directors,

managers, customers (demand ESG pledges and guarantees), investors (credit impact), suppliers (criteria), institutional stakeholders, but also internally (one of the main expectations of some colleagues: crucial aspect of mobilisation). Trend expected to grow: this isn't a comms trend, it's a profound trend, an operational trend."

"The social role of a company will gain prominence. Employees are going to look at if this is a company they want to be a part of."

On a more pragmatic level many CEOs link ESG performance with reputational and regulatory/legal risk that can impact the bottom line. Behaviours that undermine ESG, whether at boardroom level or deeper in an organisation, can reinforce an already sceptical view of business held by many members of the general public. And of course in a digitally connected world there is nowhere to hide:

"The demand for accountability and transparency has accelerated. There is a greater sense of distrust of organisations in general, i.e. police, bank executives. Reputational risk is at the top of the list, where board members previously felt they could contain risk, there is no containment any more due to the digital nature of everything we do. Information spreads too easily, snap a picture and send it to the newspapers. There is no privacy due to our digital footprint. Risk becomes a much

more difficult thing to manage."

"Competition for investment dollars is quite fierce. This can be a source of competitive advantage but also risk mitigation. You don't want a group to divest themselves of you for something you didn't pay attention to. It should be a Board priority."

It is clear however, that there are substantial differences in the approaches companies adopt in turning ESG theory into business practice. Not all companies seem to have a clear and consolidated ESG strategy: this generates inconsistency in corporate behaviour, and difficulties when it comes to transparent reporting. In many cases this is not

because companies have a deliberate desire to avoid ESG responsibilities:

"Today everybody is aware that something has to be done, but many don't know where to begin."

However, there are organisations that are building ESG into all of their activities – meeting stakeholders' needs for accountability and transparency in the way they do business. These companies stand out because they have a tangible alignment between ESG and their business strategy. They are capable of balancing the objectives of economic sustainability with respect for the environment and place great importance on the well-being of individuals, whether

❝ Companies building ESG into comms with all stakeholders are those leading the way ❞

they are employees, consumers or local communities.

"I'd say that it happens because there are implications in terms of the company's reputation towards each one of their target audiences, including consumers, collaborators, our whole value chain, providers, customers, etc. I think that nowadays we're more aware of the collective effort that we have to make as a society."

Council members believe that the focus on ESG has increased since the onset of COVID-19. The pandemic has shone the media spotlight on the issue and undoubtedly accelerated trends that were already underway, in particular rebalancing and giving

more presence to the weight of 'S', which had previously been given less prominence than the 'E' and 'G'. Now we see that the focus on employees – the engine and the beating heart of companies – has grown:

"I think the pandemic has been the main trigger. The experience of the pandemic has made contribution to society a big part of the company's purpose for existing. We have made it clear that we emphasise the safety of employees and their families."

"They have been more attentive to social aspects than before, especially in relation to their own employees."

"There are many aspects, but I

" Impacted by the pandemic, the 'S' of ESG has gained greater prominence "

think one of them is ESD, that is Education for Sustainable Development, for employees. The challenge is to improve the rewards, satisfaction and pride of employees by properly educating them and avoid SDG washing."

There is a strong understanding that there is no going back: companies working together with their stakeholders – investors, employees, institutions, policy makers – will play an increasingly

important role in environmental, social and governance responsibility. The future company will see new hierarchies of priorities, where society and employees will be at the top.

"New generations are looking for a job opportunity with companies that have a higher purpose. Additionally, they want to purchase products from companies that have a higher purpose and to collaborate with them."

FROM THE BOARDROOM TO THE LIVING ROOM

When ESG – Environment, Social and Governance – first emerged, it was a niche activity. The relevant initiatives of a company would be tallied, consolidated, and documented in an ESG report which might be filed as an appendix to an Annual Report and reside on some obscure section of a corporation's website. These reports could be used to persuade governments, media, investors and

" Reputation Council members say ESG remains important for investors (76%) and their stakeholders (80%) "

other elite stakeholders that while the company was focused on making money, it was doing so in a responsible and ethical manner. Indeed, most of the senior corporate affairs professionals Ipsos has interviewed around the globe agree that ESG remains important for investors (76%) and other stakeholders (80%).

Companies now realise that ESG is more than a check-box activity which, if done well, can reduce headwinds with stakeholders and build trust among key constituents. As such, it has moved from a line function within organisations and into the boardrooms of the corporate world – highlighting the significant increase in importance that companies place – and stakeholders demand – on their ESG performance.

"The demand for accountability and transparency has accelerated. There is a greater sense of distrust of organisations in general."

Companies are learning that they no longer need to be so modest about their activities. Where companies did not want to be seen boasting about their ESG work at risk of being labelled as insincere, consumers now want and demand to know what companies are doing to address issues like sustainability, D&I, representation, and social justice matters.

"We have never put it so much in the foreground, not even in communication. This started to change in the past two or three years."

ESG is now being leveraged to connect boardrooms to living rooms. It is increasingly becoming part of the value proposition that companies propose to their customers and consumers more generally. Some corporations are even moving away from the ethos that their primary responsibility is to their investors and towards an existence focused on contributing to and bettering the lives of those around them – customers or not.

In fact, a majority (55%) of Council members say that ESG is important to their customers as well, and 44% believe it is important to the general population – regardless of whether or not they are customers. In other words, it matters to citizens at large, who, through their advocacy or criticism, can have a profound impact on the reputation of a corporation, and who can influence the attitudes, beliefs and actions of key stakeholders such as government and regulators.

*"[ESG] was seen as a 'nice to have', an extra and unnecessary thing."*

44%
of Council members believe that ESG is important to the public

Today, however, it is definitely at the heart of all companies. The theme of purpose over pure profit. Consumers used to buy a product just because they liked it. Today they buy it because they like it, because it's good for them, because the packaging is recyclable, because the company they buy it from is a company that is responsible towards its employees, communities, planets, and focuses on the whole supply chain."

Where should companies be looking to focus their ESG work? Of course, each company needs to find causes that are relevant and credible for their own business, and crucially, intrinsic to their core business function. But a few themes emerged from our research:

- First, **think big**: companies must own an issue and be prepared to make a sustained investment of time, money and energy on that issue. As one Council member says, *"we are not thinking in the right scale. We should think about water sources in general, not just a little river."*

- Second, **demonstrate impact**: *"the link between societal contributions and the alignment of one's business objectives is not always clear."* Measurement to demonstrate impact is required, as is thoughtful, insightful and easily digestible reporting of one's ESG impact. These become your proof points which you can communicate.

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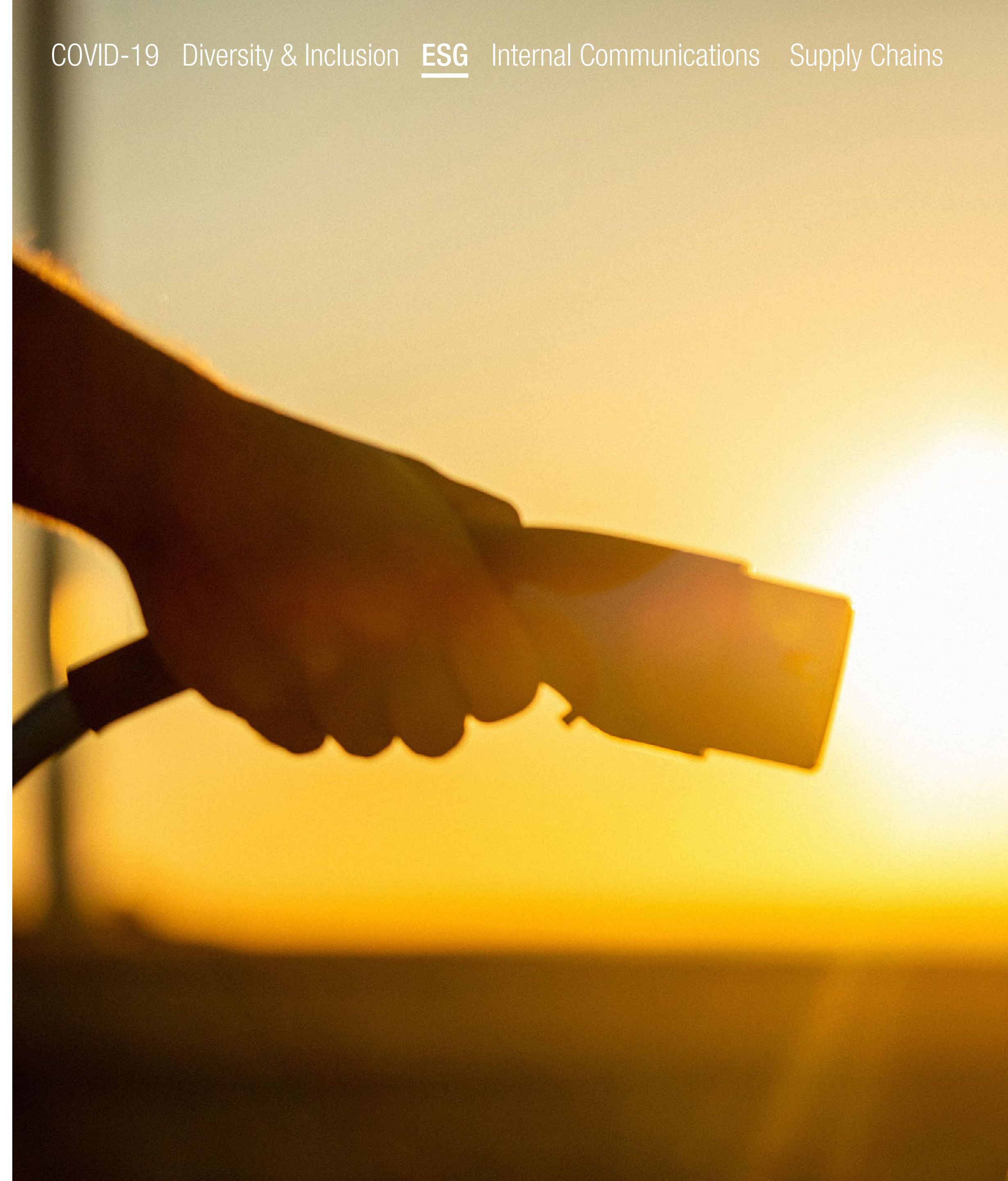
" **ESG is a business opportunity for brands to build customer loyalty** "

- Third, **reimagine communications**: some Council members stress that talking a lot about ESG but not backing it up with action can be interpreted as greenwashing, for example. *"A lot of companies do a lot of amazing things but don't talk enough about it on the right channel."* Identify which messages resonate the most, and to whom you should be targeting those messages.

In short, companies must find the issues that matter most to their stakeholders (general population included), identify the actions they can take that are seen as credible and where they can have a positive impact, demonstrate that impact, measure that impact, and communicate it effectively to the right people. The time has passed for companies to be shy about their ESG efforts. The opportunity exists to use ESG to bring consumers closer to boardrooms and to make them more loyal to those companies and brands.

THE EVOLVING ROLE OF EMPLOYEES IN COMPANIES' ESG CREDENTIALS

Employees are a crucial stakeholder group for companies when it comes to their Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) practice – that much is clear from the fifteenth sitting of the Ipsos Reputation Council.

Globally, three quarters of Council members (77%) agree that their company's ESG performance is

important to employees – a similar proportion to those agreeing ESG is important to investors (76%) and audiences like the media, NGOs and legislators (80%). On the other hand, only 55% agree it is important to their customers, and 44% that it is to the general public.

A number of Council members stress the expectations from staff, especially among younger generations, for companies to be values-driven, to take a stance on issues they care about, and to 'give back' – whether that is on environmental, social, or governance matters.

"ESG is increasingly important to employees of companies. We see that as our CEO speaks out regularly to the company on societal issues and we see the responses that come back. It's really connecting and giving people a sense of pride, being a part of a company that's leading with its values. For the next generation of employees, it's going to be even more important to join a company that has purpose and is

77%

of Council members agree that a company's ESG performance is important to employees

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mission-driven. It's key to attracting the talent companies are going to need to thrive."

"What the future talents and the talents of today want, and how they judge companies, is very different."

"Primarily, where I would see it most often is around hiring, around the questions that prospective employees ask, the sorts of things that people want to know when they evaluate a company that they would want to be a part of."

As such, ESG performance has become a major factor in Gen-Z talent acquisition and retention. As competition for recruiting the best

employees looks only to increase in many markets, it is important for companies to consider what 'net benefits' they bring – not only to the employees themselves, but to wider society. And then next, to articulate this in a genuine and transparent way.

For example, in an Employee Value Proposition (EVP), showing that the advantage of working for company X is that the employee can make an active contribution to Y.

That 'active contribution' looks to become increasingly important for another reason as well. Some Council members refer to companies – sometimes their own – that have started to incorporate staff behaviours into their ESG goals.

" ESG is increasingly key to attracting and retaining top employee talent "

These companies have started to look at their employees' individual carbon footprints as well as the overall company's footprint:

"We just had a sustainability meeting where we've said we'll start measuring our employees' carbon footprint [...] By checking each employee's carbon footprint we begin to raise awareness of how different elements in your daily life – like the use of some services – impact your individual carbon footprint. So, I think that in our case, the company does much more than people are aware of."

This movement may have far-reaching implications, if it also means that employees' behaviour starts to count towards the overall company's goals – for example its carbon footprint. That would mean that employees would have an active role to play. It makes them partly responsible for their company's ESG credentials. Perhaps this dynamic is a response to the demands placed by employees on their employers.

A "two-way street" of employee engagement on ESG makes sense – we all know that, as ultimately, everyone has a role to play. Indeed, in the future company it is likely that we will see the greater democratisation of corporate thinking around ESG formally set out in the organisational management process – with any resulting agenda mandated to be developed hand in hand with employees rather than via current top down structures.

04

Internal Communications

THE RISE OF THE EMPATHETIC CEO

As figureheads for the organisations they lead, CEOs and the 'C-Suite' often have a prominent role in external communications. Meanwhile, until recently, it could be argued that internal communications from this group sat further down the list of their priorities. Today, the dynamics of the role of senior management in internal communications is evolving.

There is an increasingly clear need to ensure that internal comms match external messages. The say-do gap is not an especially new challenge
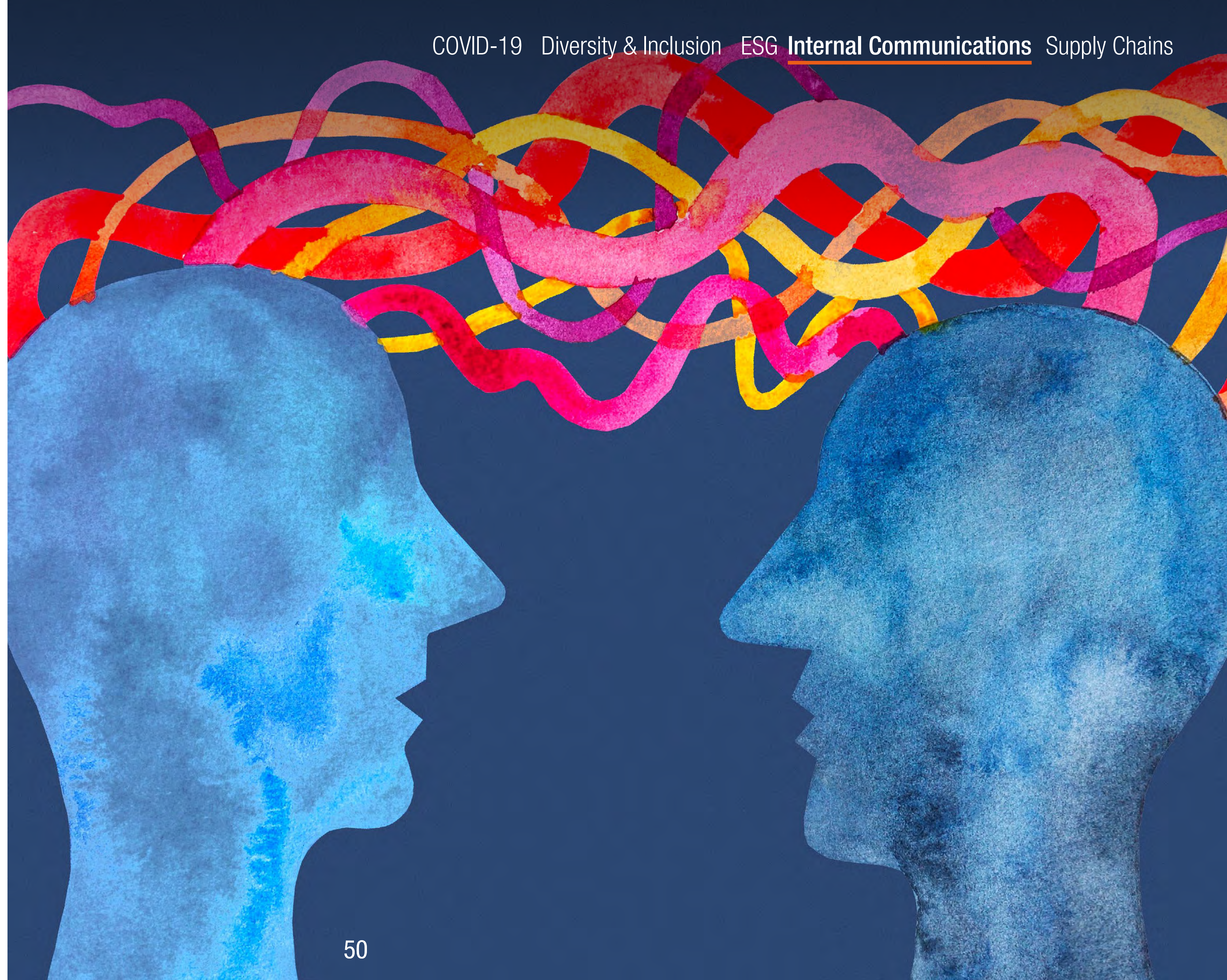
for communicators. However, the need to foster a corporate culture and behaviour that reflects the stated purpose and values of a company is fast shaping the way in which leaders communicate with their employees. A few prominent examples of when this hasn't been the case has sharpened people's focus. Now, there is an expectation that communications from CEOs and other leaders are cognizant of employee attitudes and values – which by their nature will, at least to some extent, reflect wider social trends. Employees are growing in their importance in internal comms. There is a risk that if CEOs fail to properly understand and engage with their employees, and lead by example, they will struggle to foster the organisational culture they desire.

Many Council members report that this need to demonstrate an understanding of employee perspectives in internal communications is one of the biggest changes that they have seen in their lifetime. Previously, there was a sense that senior management teams had a non-existent dialogue with many of their employees and that there was a lack of relevance in their messages:

"I remember one supposedly real joke going around of somebody washing their hands in the company bathrooms and above the hot air hand dryer was a sign "Press button for message from Chairman.""

Many Council members state that change is still needed going

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forwards and there needs to be a better understanding of employee perspectives.

"Leaders [need] to regularly engage with employees in a much more informal way… There are quite a lot of dinosaurs around who lead the leading companies of today but hopefully the CEO of the future is going to understand that that is an important part of their job and if you can't build that normal authentic relationship with your employees then you are in the wrong job quite frankly."

The need to close the distance between senior management and employees has greatly increased in recent years. CEOs who were perhaps insulated

from their employee's views have been made examples of. The UK Chairman for a well-known professional services firm was forced to resign for showing a distinct lack of understanding of his employee's own personal struggles during COVID-19, as well as being tone death to shifting public expectations and discourse on issues of equality, inclusion, and workforce diversity.

This incident isn't in isolation; the CEO of a large fitness company was forced to step down also for making incendiary remarks and missing the zeitgeist, while another of a travel company was forced out after being blamed for viewing their own reputation above that of the company's. Leaders of a well-known brewer who positioned themselves as counterculture

" Senior management and employees must be less detached post-pandemic "

'characters' with a passion for purpose-led business, also found themselves tackling reputationally damaging media coverage. Despite a flurry of comms focussing on their value-led environmental and social initiatives, they found themselves having to issue a public apology following a well-publicised open letter from former employees citing behaviour and a culture very much at odds with its external PR.

The pandemic has simply amplified and hastened a change to internal communications that has been long coming. Many Council members have realised the need for change, but the pandemic has forced the change to happen at a greater pace than many anticipated.

"It was a process that had already began, and it got accelerated by the pandemic."

Ensuring that there aren't gaps between what a CEO says externally and internally and that they are at a minimum attuned to their employee outlook will be a crucial factor in communications strategy from now on:

"I think the biggest difference is that a lot more of the management team are seeing that internal communication is important to drive the culture and business."

The future CEO will be one that understands the power of internal communications in driving corporate culture. Getting internal communications wrong can damage reputations – and potentially the bottom line. However, by harnessing internal comms to demonstrate affinity

and relevance with employees – and setting an example in their actions, CEOs will be able to unlock the reputational power of aligned internal and external comms and behaviour, where promises match delivery.

> " As internal and external comms behaviours align, CEOs are able to unlock reputational power "

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THE EMPLOYEE DRIVEN CORPORATE AGENDA

Amplifying the employee voice in the corporate environment has never been more important. The COVID-19 pandemic, social tensions and the prevalence of remote digital communication has emphasised the need for a more proactive approach to fostering employee engagement. Engaged and empowered employees strongly correlate with greater

productivity, a positive work culture, and heightened employee advocacy.

"Seven to eight years ago, employee communications were an afterthought. Now, it is the centrepiece of reputation. It has become the most important function. It's gone from being transactional to, how do we create dialogue and give employees a greater voice in how the company is run?"

There is little doubt that effective employee engagement has increased in importance because of COVID-19. Remote working has introduced new challenges and internal communications have had to adapt, as offices and places of work have emptied. It became

vital to keep employees informed and connected, changing not only how internal communications operates but also how employees interact with it. Council members felt that this change impacted employee expectations of internal communications and has created a more bottom-up, rather than top-down approach; opening a two-way dialogue in which employees contribute to the conversation rather than being dictated to.

When asked 'in the future, employees will control internal communications, rather than employers', Council members were largely split, with 36% agreeing this would be the way forward and 43% disagreeing. Reflective of this split was the view that there should

be a balance as *"employers and employees are two sides of the same coin, communications are controlled by both."*

While there is acknowledgement that senior leaders should continue to be responsible for strategy, Council members place an increased importance on the need to understand and respond to employee views on the direction of the company and what it stands for. They feel that incorporating the employee voice in this process will ensure they are aligned to purpose and vision and encourage them to be company advocates and ambassadors.

"Internal communications has never been more important. Employees are

seen as a critical stakeholder group – one that can challenge a company and one that can support it."

Council members clearly feel that internal communications have gone beyond updates about purely business issues and now include a broader view of life and the society in which the company and employees are members. Issues can range from COVID-19, to racial inequalities, to climate change. Employees now have a greater role in influencing internal communications – going well beyond the passive interaction that may have been the norm previously.

"It's [internal communications] morphed into employee engagement and making sure that there's a strong

" Employees are a critical stakeholder group – to challenge and support "

culture and that colleagues are involved in a lot of the things that make this company a great company to work for. A lot of things have turned into internal initiatives… Diversity groups have become even more important and people are recognising more how important diversity and inclusion is in a company."
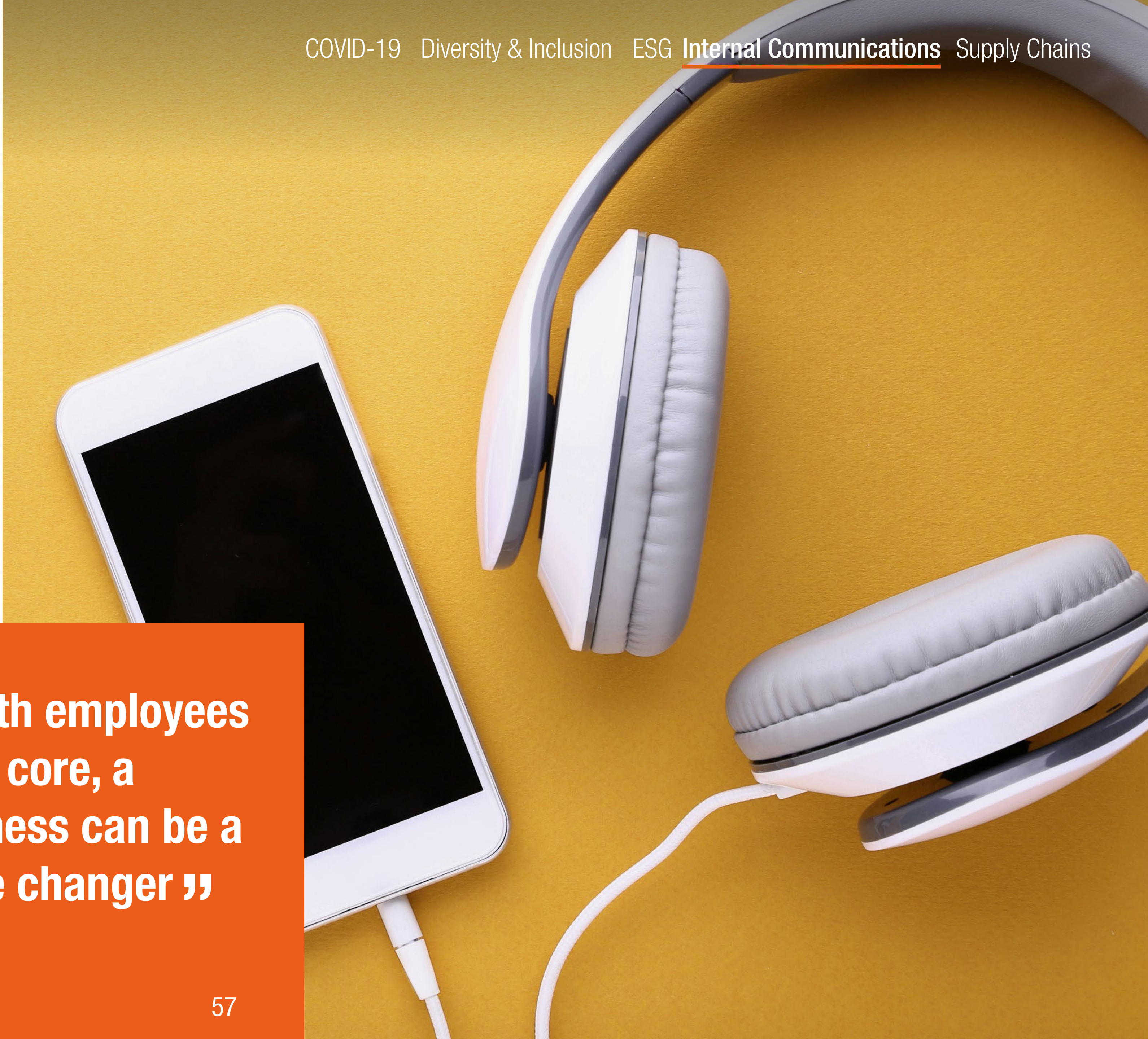
Looking to the future, our global studies show areas such as sustainability and inclusion and

diversity are becoming more important for the public and, therefore, areas that employees want to see their employers address more actively. Globally, 68% of adults agree that if businesses do not act now to combat climate change, they will be failing their employees and customers.[3] 79% of adults agree that reducing gender inequalities would benefit society as a whole[4] and 55% of adults support laws banning discrimination against LBGT people

for employment, access to education and housing or social services.[5]

The role of the employee in internal communications has changed. One way messages from head office to the employee are no longer fit for purpose. Employees expect to be heard and to be central in driving the company's broader direction and social agenda.

Treating employees as an important stakeholder group is a crucial step for reputational success for the future company. Bringing the employee voice into the company and harnessing it can enrich the company culture and create a unified workforce that is dedicated to driving and delivering company strategy.

" With employees at its core, a business can be a game changer "

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05

Supply Chains

REPUTATION THREAT OR OPPORTUNITY?

As companies face greater scrutiny, the issue of supply chain management has risen up the corporate agenda. Various stakeholder groups including traditional media, online influencers, NGOs, government and investors are taking more interest in the way that companies bring their products and services to market.

There is little doubt that in a digitally connected world, examples of bad practice in the supply chain can be

communicated to millions of people with a single keystroke. The corporate landscape is littered with companies that have suffered reputational damage over issues such as the mistreatment of workers or the irresponsible sourcing of raw materials.

The impact of supply chain mismanagement can lead to a wide range of negative outcomes including product boycotts, aggressive regulation of a company's activities, a share price collapse, or at its very worst, threatening a company's license to operate.

It is therefore perhaps not surprising that most Council members (87%) agree that companies talk more to stakeholders about reputational issues in supply chains now than they did five years ago. Whereas in the past, supply chains were perceived as separate entities to companies, they are now seen as an extension of the company

87%

of Council members say companies talk more to stakeholders about reputational issues in supply chains now than five years ago

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itself. This shift in perception presents both an opportunity and a risk for a company's reputation. As one Council member puts it:

"You can do a lot as an individual or company to shape your reputation, but reputation can be impacted, both positively and negatively, by those who you connect yourself to in the outside world".

Companies can capitalise on this shift in perception by ensuring that the supply chain aligns with their own values and principles in areas such as D&I and ESG. Alignment in these areas helps drive positive perceptions of a company. Furthermore, Council members overwhelmingly agree that embracing areas such as D&I benefits

companies (96% agree). One Council member highlights Starbucks as an example of a company aligning with its suppliers on ESG:

"Starbucks is a perfect example. They've done advertising about where their coffee beans are sourced and their supply chain. That is going to become critically more important to other industries going forward."

Furthermore, companies have an opportunity to use local suppliers to help bolster their local economy post COVID-19. As one Council member puts it, *"one of the things reinforced by COVID-19 is this attention to locality, to where you produce, and the supply chain becomes an important*
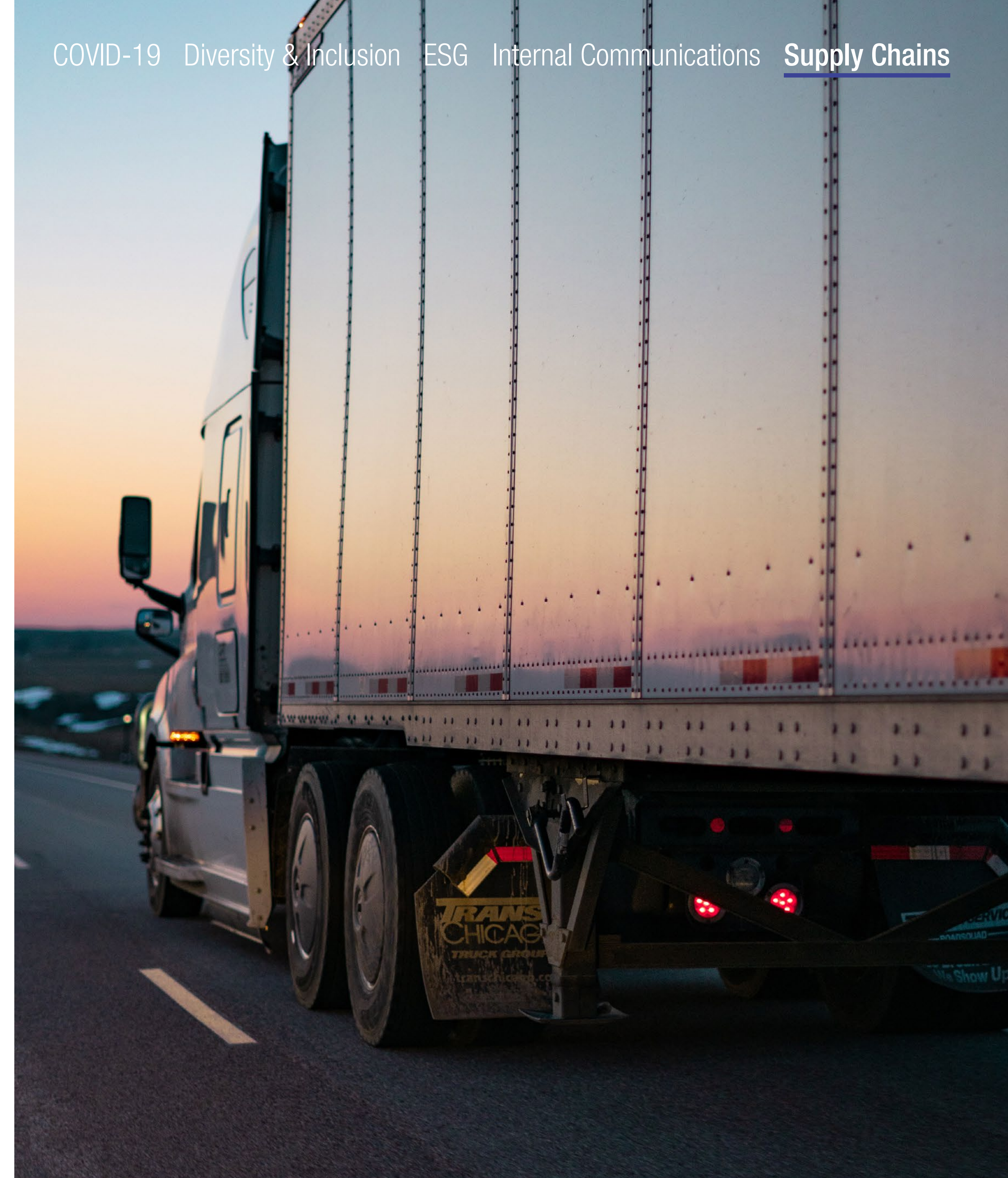
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" **The future is going to be for those companies who are transparent and open about the way they operate** "

reputational lever and can make a difference."

Regarding the risks, Council members raise several known supply chain issues such as: plastic use, carbon emissions, modern slavery, child labour, data protection, and human rights. Council members suggest that companies can mitigate these risks by diversifying their supply chains, enabling them to switch to new suppliers if any issues arise. At the same time, companies need to proactively mitigate these risks by continuously monitoring their suppliers and communicating with stakeholders and customers early on if issues occur. Overall, companies are increasingly feeling responsible for their supply chains and being held

accountable by key stakeholders. As one Council member says, *"if we want to be a responsible party in terms of carbon footprint, for example, we have to make our suppliers aware of these issues."*

Ultimately, the future company must mitigate their supply chain risks and be communicative with stakeholders about any issues that occur. There are opportunities for companies to be increasingly transparent with stakeholders, ensuring that supply chains are aligned with their own values and helping local economies to recover post COVID-19. As one Council member surmises: *"The future is going to be for those companies who are transparent and open about the way they operate."*

Reputation Council participants 2021

Name	Organisation	Role
Takayuki Saito	Ajinomoto Co., Inc.	General Manager, Global Communications Dept.
Jodie Read	Alcoa	Director Corporate Affairs
Claire Sheahan	Alexion	Vice President of Public Affairs and External Partnerships
Malena Morales	ALICORP	Vice President of Corporate Affairs
Hunter Hoffman	AmTrust	SVP, Global Marketing Communications
Alessandra Favilli	Angelini Holding	Direttore relazioni esterne e istituzionali
Chris Pettett	Anglicare	Public Affairs Manager
Cesar Vargas	Anheuser-Busch InBev	Vice President, Legal and Corporate Affairs
Louise Fernley	Anheuser-Busch InBev	Communications Director, Europe
Christy Noland	Astellas Pharma	Senior Director, Corporate Communications
Gisela Lindstrand	Atlas Copco AB	Chief communications officer
Pablo Fernandez	AUNA	Communication and Corporate Positioning Manager
Rob Six	Avery Dennison	Vice President, Global Communications
Clayton Ford	AWS	Senior Manager, Public Policy
Gianluca Randazzo	Banca Mediolanum	Head of Sustainability
Robert Calamari	Bank of America	Senior Vice President, Corporate Reputation Management

Name	Organisation	Role
Lise Lemonnier	Bayer	Head of communication
Erick Sablich	BCP	Institutional Relations Manager
Tony Cudmore	BHP	Group Sustainability and Public Policy Officer
Carine Lauru	BNP Cardif	Head of communication
Roberto Leopardi	Bolton Group	Chief Executive Officer
David Bickerton	BP	Director of Communications
Anne-Caroline Briand	BPP Banque privée	Communication and CSR director
Carlo Fornaro	Brand Reporter Consulting	Founder & Chairman
Massimiliano Colognesi	British American Tobacco	Head of External Affairs
Mat Sears	BT	Director of Corporate Affairs, Consumer Division
Cole Shultz	Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers	Vice President of Communications
Michelle Hecht	Citizens Bank	Executive Vice President and Head of Communications
Sandra Alencastre	Coca-Cola	Director of Public Affairs, Communications and Sustainability
María Alejandrina Álvarez	Coca-Cola	Directora de Asuntos Públicos, Comunicaciones y Sustentabilidad Arg & Uru. The Coca-Cola Company
Julian Hunt	Coca-Cola Europacific Partners	Vice President, Public Affairs, Communications and Sustainability, GB, Norway and Sweden
Vance Merolla	Colgate Palmolive	Worldwide Director, Global Sustainability
Charlotte Cool	Compass Group	Group Director of Communications & Corporate Affairs
Giuseppe Zuliani	Conad	Head of Marketing Communications
Shirley Powell	Cox Automotive	SVP, Communications and Industry Relations

Name	Organisation	Role
Manabu Kato	Daikin Industries, LTD	Department Manager, Research & Analysis Group, Marketing Research Div.
Joerg Bodanowitz	DAK Gesundheit	Leiter Stabsbereich Unternehmenskommunikation / Head of Corporate Communications
Rich Jeffers	Darden Restaurants	Senior Director, Communications
Tim Mapes	Delta Airlines	Senior VP, Chief Marketing & Communications Officer
Andreas Bartels	Deutsche Lufthansa AG	Head of Communications Lufthansa Group
Joachim Landefeld	Deutsche Post DHL	Communication Manager
Michael Schlechtriem	Deutsche Telekom	Corporate Communications VP Digital Transformation & Development
Dominic Redfearn	Diageo	Global Brand and Communications Director
Sofía Corral	DirecTV	Directora de Comunicaciones Estratégicas, Internas y Prensa en DIRECTV Latin America
Francesco Cibò	Dr. Schär	Director of Brand Marketing & Communication
Clare Harbord	Drax Group	Executive Director, Corporate Affairs
Fergus Campbell	eBay	Head of Communications
Cristina Parenti	Edison	Head of External Relations and Communication
Amy Hytowitz	Edwards Lifesciences	Senior Director, Global Communications and Public Affairs Strategy
Henrik Øinæs Habberstad	Equinor	Head of Brand and Creative
Rob Clark	ExxonMobil	Head of Global Communications
Fabiana Distefano	Ferrero	Jefe de Relaciones Institucionales, PR y Comunicaciones Corporativas
Roberta Kozinski	Frontier Communications	Senior Manager, Brand ID and Reputation Management

Name	Organisation	Role
Antonio Mariani	GBfoods	General Manager BU Italy
Alex Kalomparis	Gilead Sciences	Vice President, Public Affairs, International
Thomas Barbelet	Groupe Adelaide	Marketing and communication director
José Luis Leyva Urenda	Grupo Bimbo	Global VP of Communications and Diversity and Inclusion.
Giuseppe Galiano	Gruppo Hera	Direttore Centrale Relazioni Esterne
Paul Pellazari	Hardrock Café	VP, Global Social Responsibility
Jorge Paradela	Heineken	Corporate Affairs Director Europe
Hans Daems	Hitachi	COP26 Director, Group Public Affairs Officer, EMEA
Atsushi Konno	Hitachi, Ltd.	General Manager, Group Brand Strategy Department, Corporate Brand & Communications Division
Stina Sandell	Holmen	Executive vice president sustainability and communication
Jeff Dahncke	HP	Head of Corporate Communications
Morgan Bone	HSBC	Global Head of Communications - Commercial Banking, Global Banking & Markets
Andre Carter	Hyundai	Global Head of Communications, Urban Air Mobility Division
Marianne de Battisti	ICADE	Member of the Comex in charge of the Communication & Institutional relations
Kai Boschmann	International SOS	Chief Marketing & Communications Officer
Ian Weatherhead	Ipsen	Head of Corporate Affairs, UK & Ireland Global Hub
Sarah Colamarino	Johnson & Johnson	Vice President, Corporate Brand Equity
Joanna de Koning	Just Eat	Global Head of CSR (at Just Eat at time of interview)
Jill Feldon	Kaiser Permanente	Vice President, Strategy Communications
Lisa Sanders	Keir Group	Group Head of Communications and Marketing

Name	Organisation	Role
Nobuhiko Hori	Kirin Holdings Company, Limited	Executive Officer, General Manager, Corporate Communications Dept.
Steve Lombardo	Koch Industries	Chief Communications and Marketing Officer
Tom Goddard	KPMG	Head of Communications
Tobias Stephan	Landeshauptstadt München	Leiter Kommunikation, Marketing & Employer Branding
Eric de Branche	LEEM	Communication director
Charlotte West	Lenovo	Executive Director, Global Corporate Communications
Filippo Grasso	Leonardo Company	Italian Institutional Affairs Director
Sarah Larvor	Lloyds Banking Group	Group Reputation Strategy and Planning Director (at Lloyds Banking Group at time of interview)
Scott James	Lloyds Banking Group	Head of Reputation Strategy, Planning and Creative
Fernando Alarcón	L'Oreal	Director of Corporate Responsibility for Hispanic Countries of Latin American Region
Elsa Chantereau	L'Oréal France	Communication and Public Affairs director
Rob Imig	L'Oréal group	VP Corporate Image and Branding
Filippo De Caterina	L'Oréal Italia	Director of Corporate Communications, Sustainability and Public Affairs
Jon Sellors	LV	Head of Corporate Communications
Andy Pharoah	Mars	Vice President, Corporate Affairs and Sustainability
David Reilly	Mars Food	VP Corporate Affairs (EMEA)
Jim Issokson	Mastercard	Senior Vice President, North America
Kenji Miyashita	McDonald's Holdings Company (Japan), Ltd.	Director, Vice President

Name	Organisation	Role
Valeria Bazzi	Mercado Libre	Communication Director at Mercadolibre.com
Sarah Kelly	MetLife Australia	Director, Communications
Sara Sizer	Mondi	Group Communication & Marketing Director
Matt Vanderlaan	Monosol	Vice President, Corporate Affairs
Stuart Williamson	Nationwide Building Society	Director of Communications
Nigel Prideaux	NatWest Group	Director of Communications & Corporate Affairs
Julian Regan-Mears	Neptune Energy	Director of Corporate Affairs
Lisa Gibby	Nestle	Senior Vice President, Global Corporate Communications
Allison McClain Joyce	Nixon Peabody	Chief Communications Officer
Dilara Firat	Novartis	Patient Engagement and Communications Manager
Susanna Zagar	Ontario Energy Board	Chief Executive Officer
Martin Zander	Otto Group	Head of Corporate Communications E-Commerce
Aimee Goldsmith	P&G	Senior Director, Sustainability & Company Communications
Julia Sobrevilla	PACIFICO	Corporate Affairs Manager
Tom Steiner	Pearson	Vice President, Corporate & Financial Communications
Jose Decarli	Pepsico	Gerente de Asuntos Corporativos para Cono Sur en PepsiCo
Dana Gandsman	Pfizer	Senior Director, Reputation Communications
James Newman	Playtech	Director of Corporate Affairs
Emily Riley	Radian	Senior Vice President, Corporate Communications and Investor Relations

Name	Organisation	Role
Peter Edwards	Reckitt	Global Public Policy & Stakeholder Management Director
Patti O'Hayer	Reckitt	Global Head Communications and Government Affairs
Emmanuel Guinot	Renault Group	VP Reputation & Content
Bernadette Murdoch	Rio Tinto	Global Head, Brand and Reputation
David Flynn	Roche	Corporate Communications Lead
Jaime Nicholson	Roche	Corporate Affairs Manager
Jeff Gaulin	Rothmans Benson & Hedges	Director, External Affairs
Natalie Whitty	RSA	Strategy, Communications and Marketing Director
Florencia Ferramondo	San Cristóbal	Comunicación Corporativa y Asuntos Públicos
Giancarlo Gonzales	SANOFI	Public Affairs Manager
Constance Descotes	Séché Environnement	Communication director
Will Clarke	Sensis	Head of Corporate Communications
Rob Colmer	Shell Upstream International	Head of External Relations: Sustainability, Transparency and Reporting
Patrizia Rutigliano	Snam	Executive Vice President Institutional Affairs, ESG, Communication & Marketing
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Catherine Kress	Stallergenes Greer	Head of communication
Barry Neville	Standard Chartered	Global Head External Communications, CCIB Marketing and Europe
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Name	Organisation	Role
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Kari Janavitz	TE Connectivity	Chief Marketing Officer
Alexander Tolstrup	Trustpilot	VP External Communications
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Sarah Fornier	Union Cristal	Communication director
Sukanya Chakraborty	VFS Global	Head - Corporate Communications & CSR
Stacey Zolt Hara	Visa	Vice President of Global Reputation and Public Affairs
Paul Cohen	Visa	SVP Chief Communication Officer
Mark Hooper	Visa	Senior Director, Head of Brand & Reputation Communications, Europe
Mauricio Kuri Curiel	Volkswagen Mexico	Communications and Governmental Affairs Director
Ed Mayer	Voya Financial	Vice President, Corporate Communications
Paul Lyon	Wolters Kluwer	Global Corporate Communications Director: Global Marketing, Communications & Planning
Peter Metcalfe	Woodside	General Manager, Climate Engagement
Akihiro Nakanishi	YANMAR CO.,LTD.	Group Divisional Manager, Brand Communication Division
Bill Price	Zoetis	Vice President, Corporate Communications

147 senior corporate communicators were interviewed as part of this year's Reputation Council. Some Council members requested that their participation remain anonymous, therefore 143 contributors are named here.
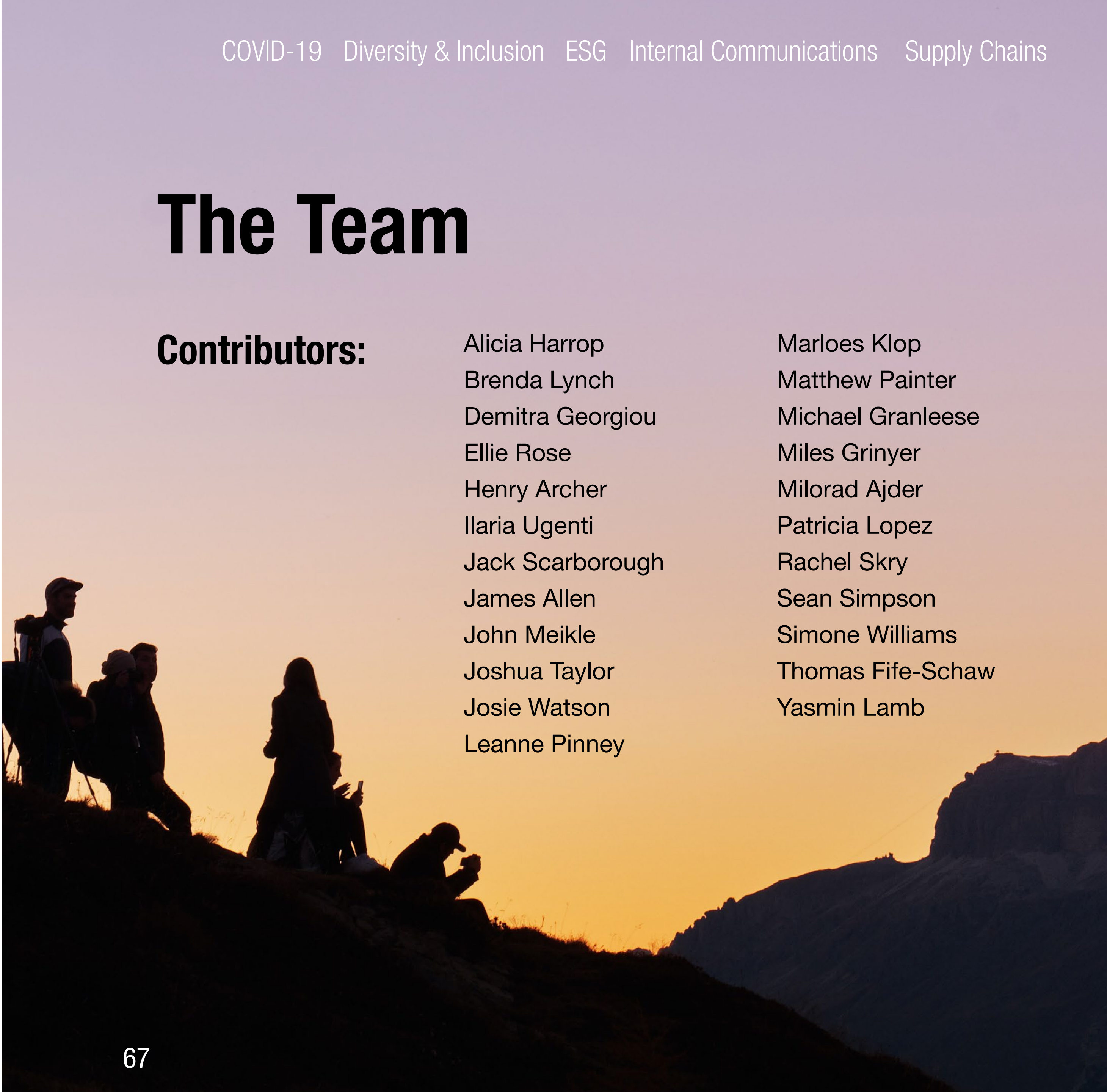
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4. Women's Forum Barometer, [n= 3500 adults aged 18+ from G7 countries], April 8th – 20th April 2021

5. Global Advisor, [n=19,069 adults aged 18-74 in 27 countries], April 23rd – May 7th 2021

The Team

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Ipsos Corporate Reputation – Reputation Research Specialists

For business leaders who aspire to better decision-making in reputation, corporate communications and corporate policy development, the Ipsos Corporate Reputation team is the insight industry's most trusted source of specialist research and guidance.

The Ipsos Corporate Reputation team helps organisations build resilient reputations and stronger relationships.

Our approach is tailored and carefully designed to meet each client's individual needs, and our research directly drives business performance:

- Measuring reputation performance relative to peers

- Identifying the drivers that create reputational value

- Defining the stakeholders that influence reputation

- Shaping a stakeholder engagement strategy

- Building communications campaigns and measuring impact

- Understanding future opportunities and risks around reputation

- Measuring the impact of and responding to a crisis

- Clarifying the actions necessary to deliver on strategic objectives

This support helps organisations strengthen their reputation capital – the ability of a brand to command preference in the marketplace – and optimise its relationships across its stakeholders.

For further information

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