

## IABC Heritage Region Members Report on Strategy and Leadership

IABC Heritage Region Conference 2007 offers several sessions on strategy and leadership, so we informally surveyed Heritage Region members to get their feedback on these topics. Highlights of their responses:

- ◆ Slightly more than 44 percent want to know how to get their strategic communication outcomes recognized by higher management
- ◆ Confidence in their ability to “get to the table” is high with 42 percent expecting to be there by this time next year
- ◆ When members were asked how strategic their organization is in planning, implementation and outcomes for eight areas of business communication, none of the eight areas received the highest response in the “very strategic” option. Only one area (marketing communications) received the highest response in the “strategic” option. Five areas received the highest response in the “somewhat strategic” option.
- ◆ A resounding 93.3 percent of the respondents reported that strategic acumen was either “very critical” or “critical” to being an effective leader
- ◆ “Building and maintaining trust” ranked highest as an essential quality of a leader among the respondents (93.9%) while just 6.7 percent said “exudes charisma” is an essential quality of a leader
- ◆ Nearly 82 percent reported they “lead the parade” with their leadership performance within their department/business unit, while 44.5 percent gave the same response for their leadership performance within their company

Complete [results](#) of the survey are at the end of this report.

### Conference Sessions on Strategy and Leadership

The keynote session on the opening night of the conference will arm you with important insights into being a leader in a world where communicators no longer have exclusive control of the message or the medium. Charlotte Otto, Global External Relations officer, The Procter & Gamble Co., will explore “*Communications Leadership in a ‘Let Go’ World*” – a world where the consumer has taken control. She will offer communicators new strategies to win in this new world.

Is your company’s leadership set to succeed during a crisis or will they fail? Learn the characteristics of effective crisis leadership from Gerard Braud, president, Braud Communications, during the general session on “The Crisis in Crisis Communications.” This internationally recognized consultant in crisis communications will help us unlock the secret to knowing if your leadership is destined for failure. Following the general session, he will present a breakout session in “*How to Write a Crisis Communications Plan that Works.*”

For those seeking tips and practices on getting recognized by upper management, the in-depth session on “*Getting to the Table: How to Become a Trusted Strategic Advisor*” may provide some tactics. Led by James Lukaszewski of The Lukaszewski Group, this session will help you focus on the powerful, motivational, and personal value of being a strategic player. You’ll learn how to develop a strategic mindset and gain the personal trust of managers and leaders.

Learn how to use the principles that guide behavior to construct messages that influence your audience’s thinking in Ken O’Quinn’s breakout session on “*Influencing Your Audience: Crafting Messages that Motivate People to Accept Your Ideas.*” O’Quinn, principal, Writing with Clarity, is a professional writing coach who conducts internal workshops for Fortune 500 companies and global PR firms.

Ever wonder why it is that some people just naturally get along with each other, while others would prefer to be on a different continent? Join Pamela Gilchrist, a certified personality trainer, to learn about nine universal personality types and the underlying needs that drive behavior, in the breakout session *“Behavior in the Workplace: Why People Click or Conflict – And What Your Can Do About It.”* Gilchrist is the founder of PR~Link Public Relations®, LLC.

Innovation is a hot topic. But, how do you find people who are really good at innovation? Join Rick Miller, president, Northlich, and John Bloomstrom, executive vice president and managing director, Influencer Marketing at Northlich, for the breakout session on *“Tap Your Born Innovators to Power Your Organization.”* They will present a case study of organizations that have identified their own innovators and helped drive big results for the companies.

Shape your media relations program as a strategic component to differentiate your company from the competition. Hugh Burnham, senior counsel and media strategist, Gutenberg Communications, and John Pratt, senior director, Public and National Media Relations, Convergys Corp., will explore how effective national media placements in top tier business and national media not only generate business leads, but also shape the perception of the company in the breakout session, *“How Corporate PR Can Win You a Seat in the Executive Suite.”*

## Survey Results

### 1. Effective leaders model numerous qualities. How important are the following qualities in an effective leader?

Quality	Percentage Essential	Percentage Important	Percentage Somewhat Important	Percentage Not Necessary
Articulates a vision	83.2	16.8	0.0	0.0
Builds and maintains trust	93.9	5.6	0.6	0.0
Exudes charisma	6.7	45.3	41.3	6.7
Ability to “stay the course”	26.3	48.6	22.9	2.2
Sees BOTH the “forest” and “the trees”	46.0	46.6	7.4	0.0
Innovative	24.2	52.8	23.0	0.0
Creates acceptance of change	59.6	35.4	5.1	0.0
Engaging presenter	17.3	58.1	23.5	1.1
Attentive listener	66.5	30.2	3.4	0.0
Attains commitment among disparate followers	50.3	44.1	5.6	0.0
Comfortable delegating authority/decisions	58.4	38.2	3.4	0.0
Attracts diverse “lieutenants”	33.3	50.8	14.7	1.1

### 2. How critical is strategic acumen to being an effective leader? (Check ONE response only)

Response	Percentage of Respondents
Very Critical	54.2
Critical	39.1
Somewhat Critical	6.7
Not at All Critical	0.0

### 3. You've been assigned to head a new communications unit within your organization. The company is headed by its third CEO in the past five years and has announced yet another long-term business strategy. The vice president you report to has made it very clear that she expects "strategic" work from your unit. What is your reaction? (Check ONE response only)

Reaction	Percentage of Respondents
Log on to IABC Job Board and Monster -- This is an impossible assignment!	0.0
Help! I need a plan -- How do I make communications strategic in this company?	13.5
I'm a competent communicator. I know how to develop and implement strategic communication actions. -- But, how do I get my strategic communication outcomes recognized?	44.4
My vice president knew who to pick for this job. -- This time next year I'll be "at the table"!	42.1

**4. Being "strategic" in planning, implementation and outcomes is high on the list of business priorities. How strategic is your organization for the following:**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage Very Strategic</b>	<b>Percentage Strategic</b>	<b>Percentage Somewhat Strategic</b>	<b>Percentage Not At All Strategic</b>	<b>Percentage Not Applicable to My Organization</b>
Employee Communications	14.0	19.3	36.8	22.2	7.6
Investor Communications	10.5	20.9	16.3	7.6	44.8
Media Relations	16.3	27.3	36.6	12.8	7.0
Public Affairs	14.1	27.6	32.4	10.6	15.3
Union/Labor Communications	3.5	9.9	16.4	9.9	60.2
Trade/Industry Communications	10.1	24.9	34.9	16.0	14.2
Marketing Communications	20.5	38.6	28.1	9.4	3.5
Community Relations	12.3	24.6	37.4	17.0	8.8

**5. How you perform as a leader may vary depending upon the environment. How would you describe your leadership performance in the following environments?**

<b>Environment</b>	<b>Percentage Hand me the mace – I'll lead the parade!</b>	<b>Percentage I'm comfortable sitting on the front porch swing – it lets me go back and forth</b>	<b>Percentage I prefer to follow the leader</b>
Within your department/business unit	81.8	17.6	0.6
Within your company	44.5	45.7	9.8
Within professional associations	31.0	42.4	26.6
Within your community (schools, local civic organizations, volunteer endeavors, etc.)	39.9	41.7	18.4
Within your circle of friends	54.9	43.3	1.8

*Note: The survey was conducted online from September 4 through September 7, 2007. The survey was sent to 2,545 valid e-mails and generated responses from 7.0% of those contacted via e-mail.*