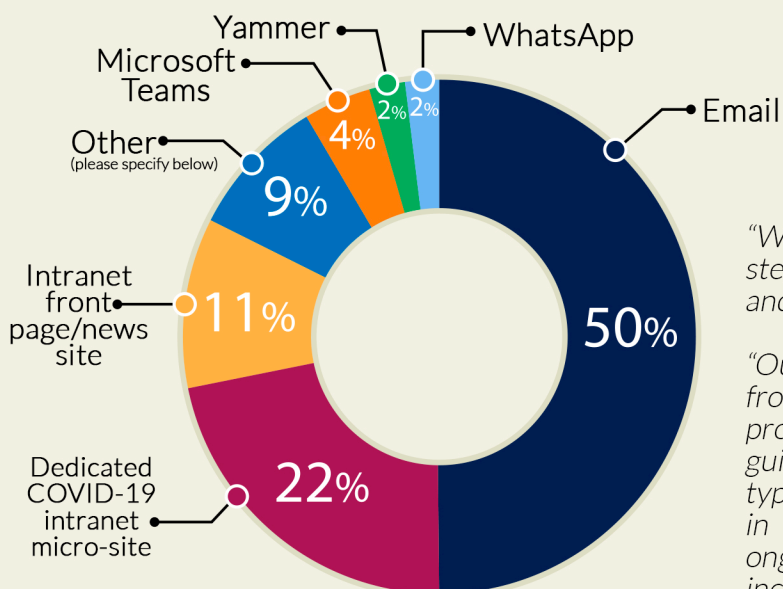


BENCHMARKING SURVEY; 50 ORGANISATIONS ON COMMUNICATING THROUGH COVID-19

50 organisations across APAC, tell us how they have been managing this crisis; covering lessons learned and their most powerful uses of communications.

How does your organisations communication efforts benchmark against them?

QUESTION 1 Which of the following are you using internally as your "single source of truth" on COVID-19?



"We also provide FAQs to give clients who want to know what steps we have taken to secure our own operations/services and our people who visit their sites."

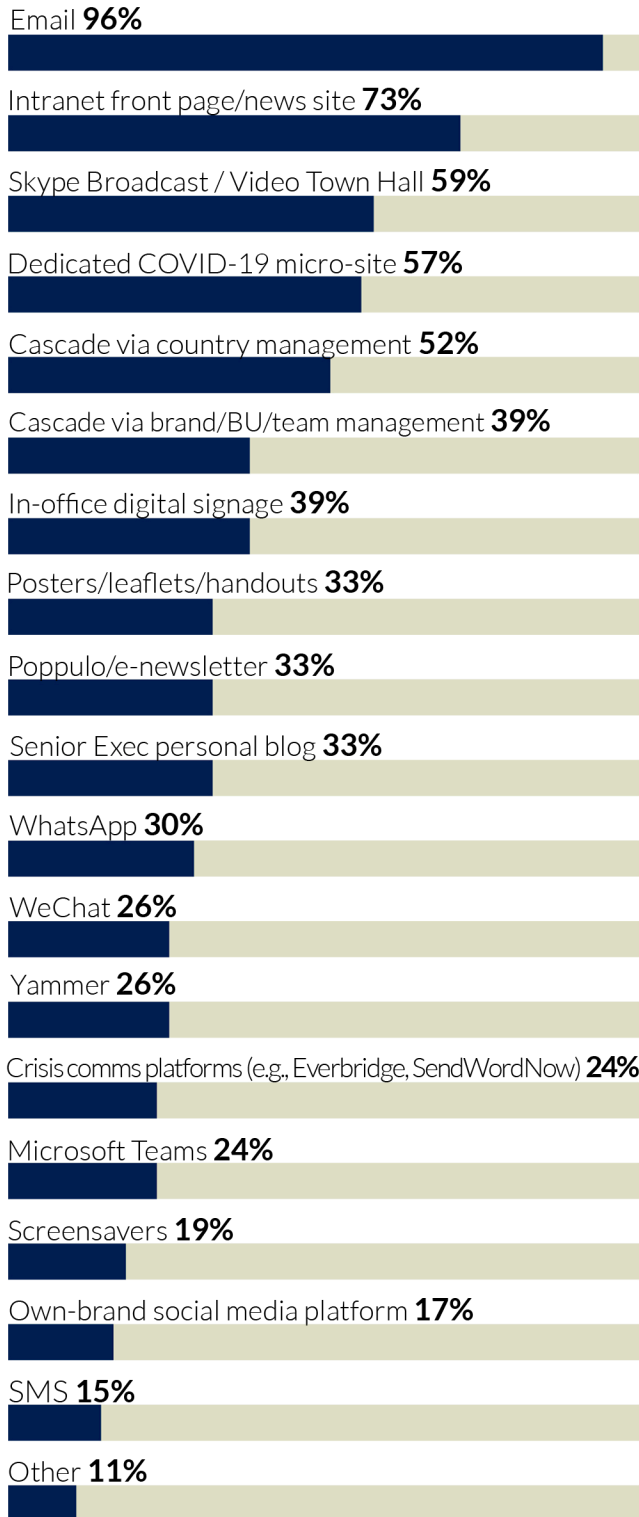
"Our insurance business has been using email communication from the regional CEO and Hong Kong branch CEO to provide regular updates to employees (these updates include guidance from Group Comms on travel policy, etc and typically cover aspects of the 5 information categories listed in Q2 below. These communications are supported by ongoing posts on Workplace on all of these 5 categories including CEO messaging. Our business has implemented a work from home option for all employees since end of Jan and this is supported by Microsoft Teams and O365."

Other; digital channels including Slack.

*Whatsapp and Yammer are not available in China.

QUESTION 2 On average, how often are any of these internal channels being updated with information on COVID-19?

Which of any of these internal channels is being used for sharing any information on COVID 19?



HOW OFTEN THE 5 MOST-USED COVID-19 CHANNELS ARE UPDATED

EMAIL



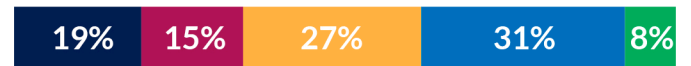
INTRANET FRONT PAGE/ NEWS SITE



SKYPE BROADCAST / VIDEO TOWN HALL



DEDICATED COVID-19 MICRO-SITE



CASCADE VIA COUNTRY MANAGEMENT



AD HOC

WEEKLY

2-3 TIMES WEEKLY

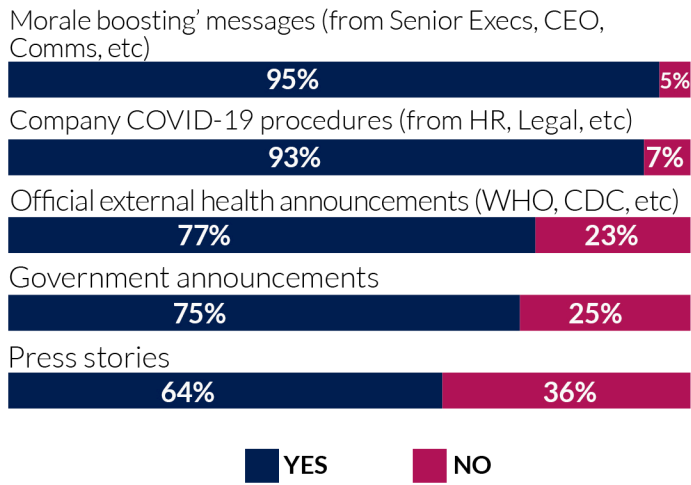
DAILY

HOURLY / SEVERAL TIMES A DAY

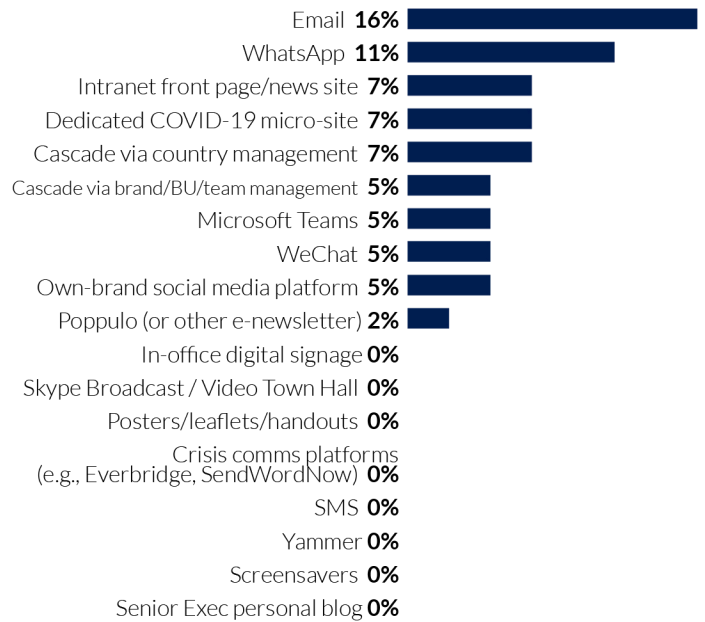
This shows us that almost 30% are updating their employees via email 2-3 times per week and over a 1/3 are updating their microsite daily.

QUESTION 3 Which are your primary channels for sharing the following 5 categories of COVID-19 news/information?

Are you sharing the these types of COVID-19 information in your official internal communications with staff?



Press stories - channels being used



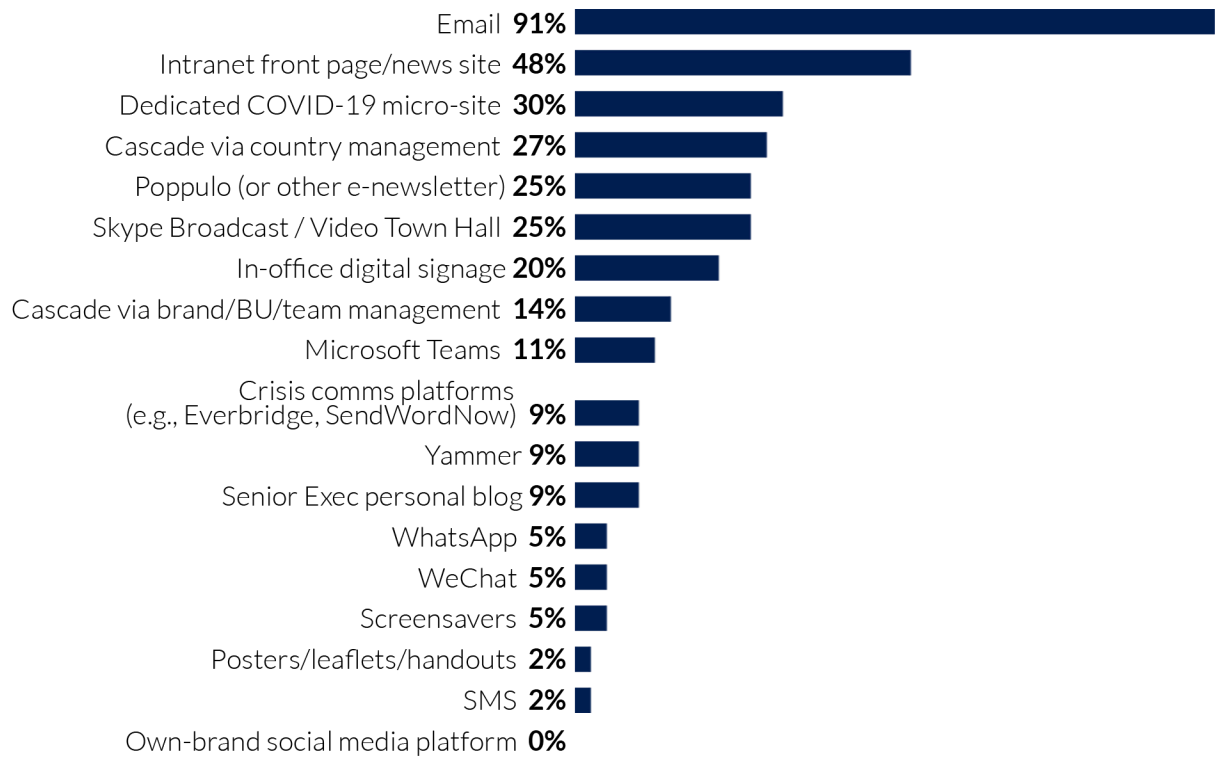
Official external health announcements (WHO, CDC, etc) – channels being used



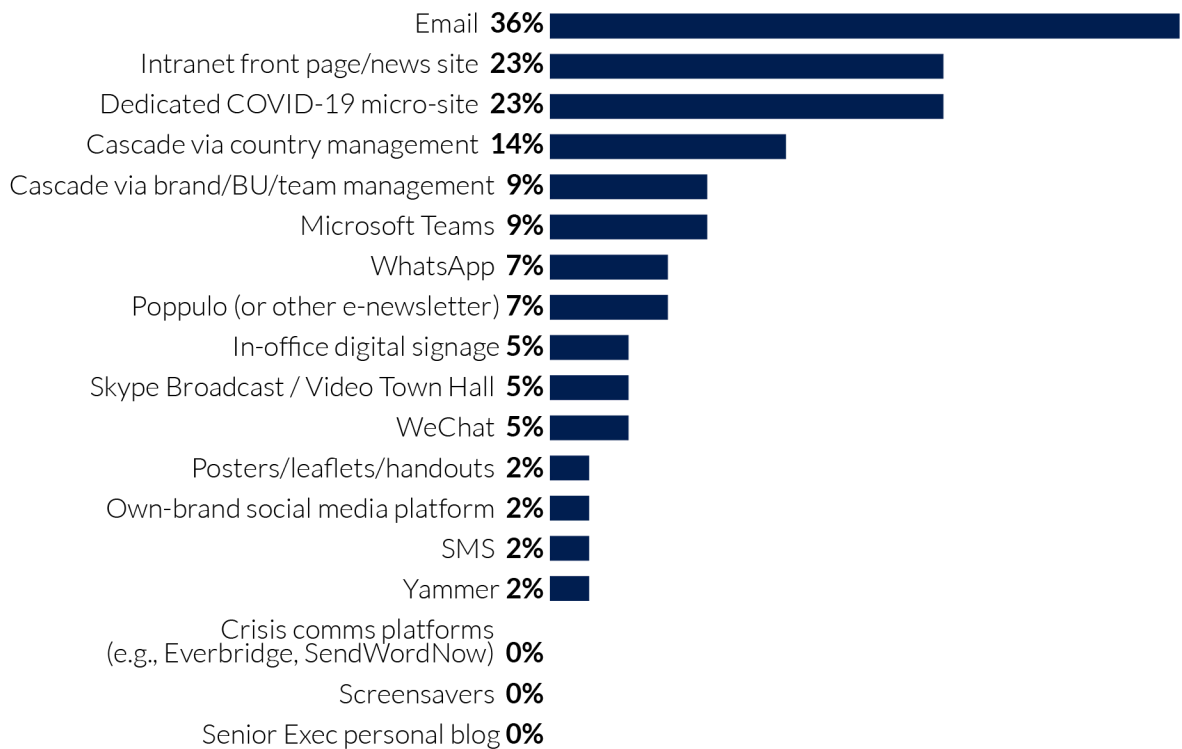
"We used yammer to be able to release ongoing updates for increased transparency and currency; allows people to ask questions (and reply): supports photos - can convey 1000 words!"

"One of the best things we've done is to be able to help people connect at a personal level through story telling personal stories - how colleagues cope with long period of WFH, how parents are coping with WFH plus kids at home etc"

Company COVID-19 procedures (from HR, Legal, etc) - channels being used



Government announcements - channels being used



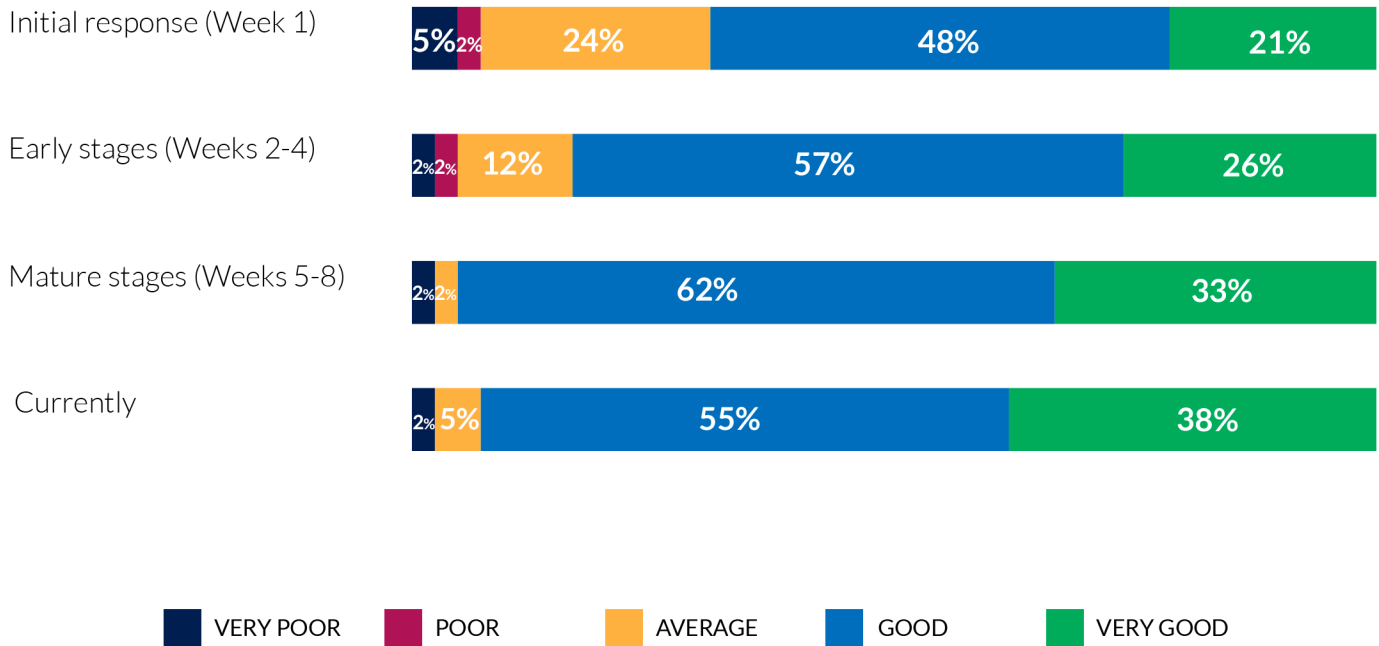
Morale boosting messages (from Senior Execs, CEO, Comms, etc)



"We did well to get buy-in from senior leadership on the need for regular communication even when we did not have a lot of 'new updates' to report or we were waiting for certain decisions to be made (e.g. extension of work from home option)."

"We communicated immediately and have kept a regular cadence. When we don't know the answer we say so, when we were waiting for clarification we say so, and when we change our advice or do something different to what people expect we make it clear why"

QUESTION 4 How would you rate your company's crisis communications since the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak?



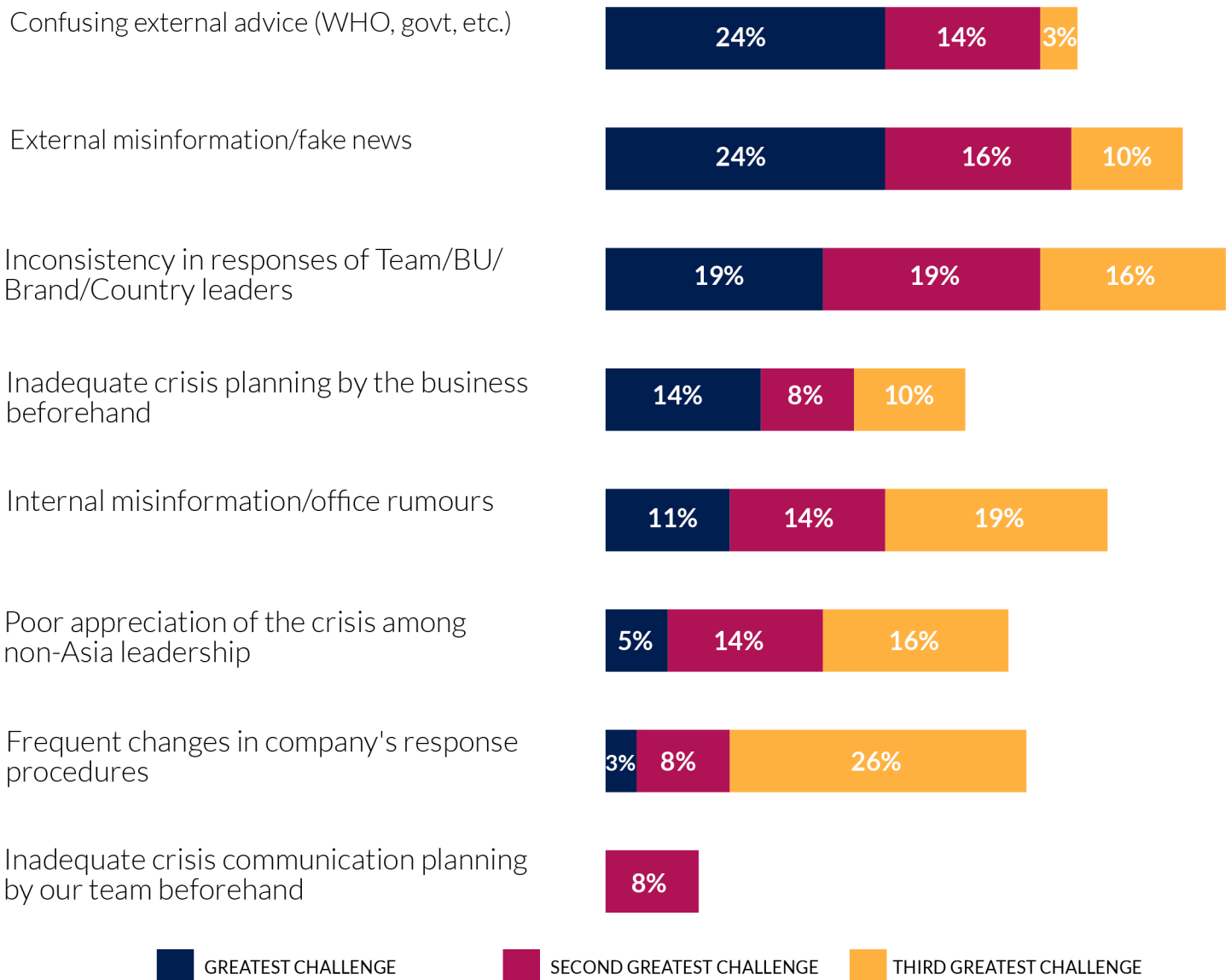
"We have managed to anticipate changes well and have passed on a lot of knowledge and experience to colleagues outside of the region as the issue grows. Our internal crisis teams swung into action quickly and has grown as the virus has spread. This means that all key functions have been engaged at an early stage"

"We have really focused on leveraging partnerships with corporate functions based in San Francisco (corporate travels, corporate safety teams). Global travel restriction decisions made deftly with complete 360 opinions across functions and locations. Same for office practices to best safeguard employees"

"We were so 'prepared' post the HK Protests on how/when/who would come together on a weekly basis to make decisions on operations/office/travel/safety - and we also had a practice for when we would escalate those messages and on which platforms. In some ways we went into the COVID-19 situation with an advantage of experience in terms of increasing the scope to manage the complete international audience across the business."

QUESTION 5 In your situation, what have been the greatest challenges to effective communication during this crisis?

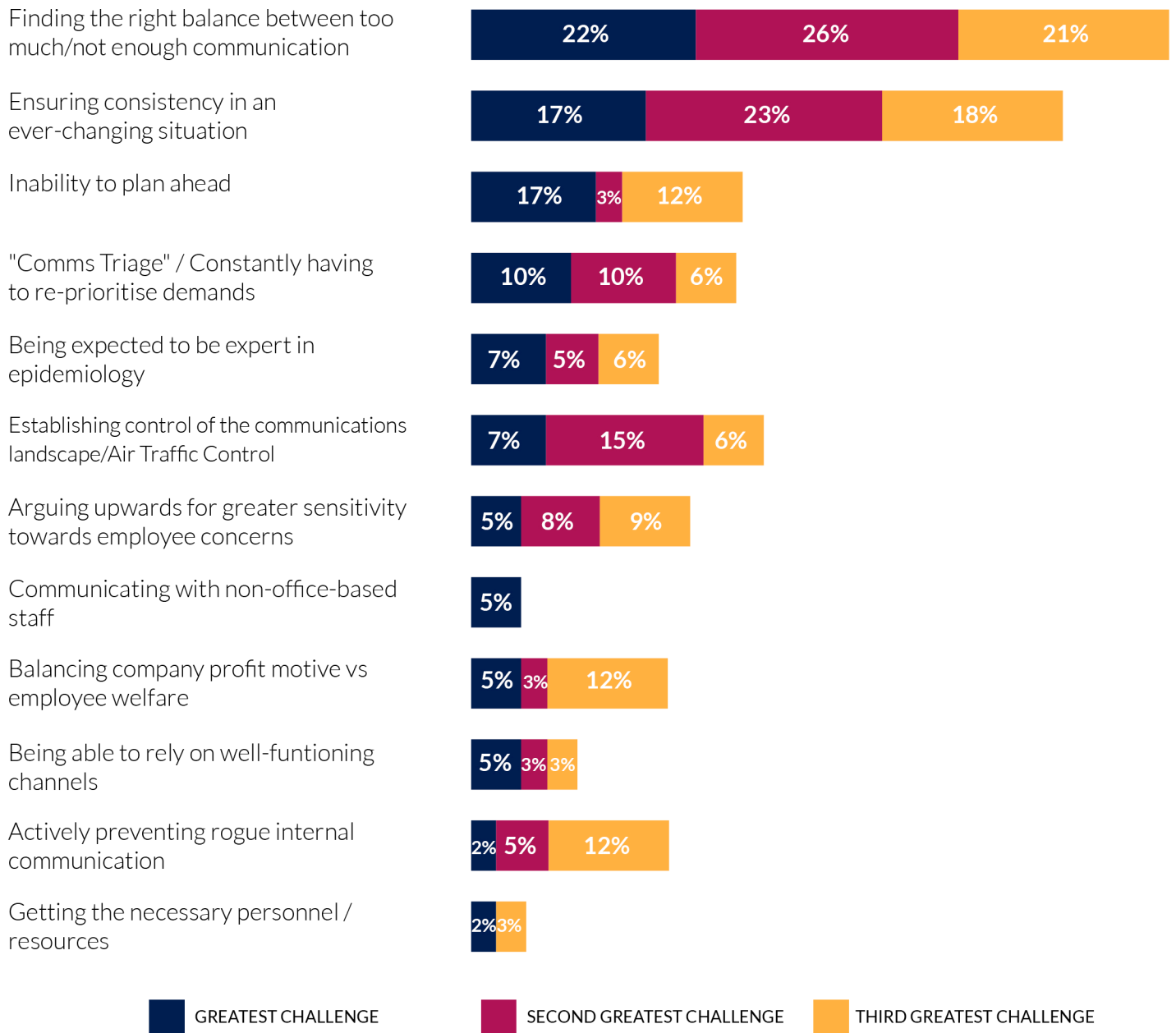
What have you found the greatest challenges to effective strategic communication during this crisis?



"At the beginning it was difficult to get consensus among leadership on office protocols. WFH policies, issues on wearing masks, etc"

"One of our biggest challenges was our clients expectations that we have tracking for at least one month travel history of every person in the company globally - we were being asked to supply this information, especially early in the issue"

QUESTION 6 Which of the following have provided your 3 greatest practical challenges throughout this crisis?



QUESTION 7: What do you think you've done particularly well during this crisis?

"Leveraging partnerships with corporate functions based in San Francisco. (corporate travel, corporate safety teams) Global travel restriction decisions made deftly with complete 360 opinions across functions and locations. Same for office practices to best safeguard employees."

"Used Yammer to be able to release ongoing updates for increased transparency and currency; allows people to ask questions (and reply); supports photos - can convey 1000 words!"

"Getting buy-in from senior leadership on the need for regular communication even when we did not have a lot of 'new updates' to report or we were waiting for certain decisions to be made (eg. extension of work from home option)."

"Helping people connect at a personal level through story telling personal stories - how colleagues cope with long periods of WFH, how parents are coping with WFH plus kids at home etc."

"We have managed to anticipate changes well and have passed on a lot of knowledge and experience to colleagues outside of the region as the issue grows. Our internal crisis teams swung into action quickly and has grown as the virus has spread. This means that all key functions have been engaged at an early juncture"

"To produce comms swiftly and correctly while having to be consistent to a changing landscape. Working collaboratively with all departments. The transparency this has given to the way-of-working and how to best support each other. We really were a team."

"Quickly creating crisis management committee"

"Correlated the nuances of different offices with their individual needs and concerns into one overarching consistent message bank."

"The internal memo that comes out every week from the MD's office which goes out to all Singapore office (this is the HQ). We decided on these singular push communications to reduce overall noise and confusion in the system"

"We communicated immediately and have kept a regular cadence. When we don't know the answer we say so, when we are waiting for clarification we say so, and when we change our advice or do something different to what people expect we make it clear why"

"Working over holidays and weekends to ensure that staff get timely and helpful advice on day one after CNY/weekends and that team leaders get early bespoke advice even before then so they are equipped to support their teams."

QUESTION 8: What have you learned throughout this crisis?

“The dangers of fake news”

“Like most things, any practice goes a long way - we'd been doing 6 months of local incident management team communications for the HK protests and related disruption so we were very prepared when COVID-19 happened”

“It's possible for the entire company to work from home.”

“If there's nothing new to add, let's not over communicate”

“People are VERY influenced by the media & external news sources - rightly or wrongly - and it is often very difficult to inform them otherwise”

“Underscored importance of technology including translation technology, eg AI features within Microsoft Teams. Also, that there is legitimate scope for using this crisis as an opportunity for external comms”

“Think ahead and not just the task in front of you.”

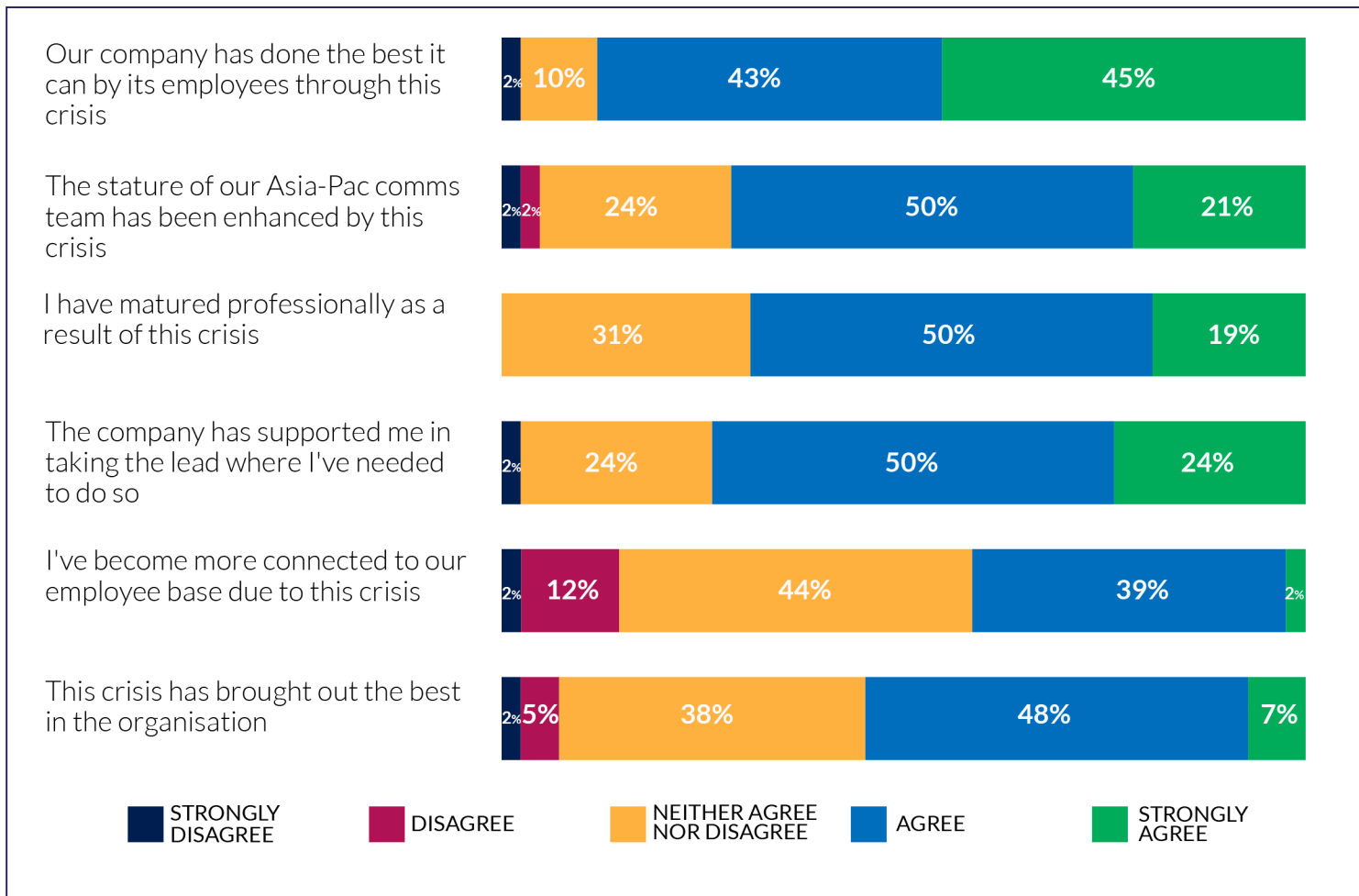
“To hold your nerve as the communication SME - during a crisis there is always someone who wants to 'change things up' or challenge best practice.”

“While preparing for different hypothetical scenarios, the list of possible scenarios can be endless, so it is important to pick several key ones and focus resources around those. Prioritization of resources allocation is very important and could be overlooked at times.”

“Cross-functional team and establish command in control”

“People tend to read / understand messages in different ways. My challenge was how to ensure that everyone has on the same page. I constantly questioned what I wrote to ensure that it was well understood.”

QUESTION 9 Finally, to what extent would you agree with the following statements?



“The experience has reinforced for me the critical role employee communications plays in an organisation. Being able to reassure employees during such a challenging time with the majority of colleagues working remotely is an important task.”

“What I think we’ve done well is giving the “Asia” point of view while Europe and US are trying to figure out how to handle the situation in those regions. We’ve been an important source of global response.”



Andrews Partnership is based in Hong Kong, working across Asia as the leading specialist executive search firm in the region for corporate affairs, communications and investor relations. We excel in connecting senior professionals throughout all industries and add additional value with our regular thought leadership roundtable sessions and research studies.

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