

Dollars and Sense

IABC's Profile survey finds a majority of members satisfied with their jobs and earning more

by Tamara L. Gillis, Ed.D., ABC

After a five-year hiatus, the IABC Research Foundation partnered with ResearchWorks Inc. to undertake a new Profile survey about salaries and job satisfaction in the profession. And the results were encouraging: Overall, IABC members are satisfied with their salaries and their current organizations. They also report increases in their salaries—27 percent since the last IABC Research Foundation Profile study in 2002—and in the size of communications staff and budgets.

Accreditation and higher levels of education and experience continue to serve as indicators for higher base salary levels. The survey results also suggest that gender influences base salary.

Over the past five years, a number of changes were made to the Profile study. The biggest of these was to split it into two projects. Part 1 maintains the survey of the IABC membership on salary, compensation and responsibilities of the communicator. Part 2 will investigate department structure, function and best practices associated with organizational reporting relationships and the communication function of organizations.

With these changes in mind, ResearchWorks, the firm commissioned to conduct the survey, streamlined the survey methodology. All data was weighted by chapter to accurately reflect the contribution of each chapter to the overall total. Also, to make comparisons across currencies, all reported amounts were converted from the currency indicated by the respondents to U.S. dollars using the 2006 yearly average rate of exchange. *Note that the salary data contained in this report is offered as a guide only and should not be construed as a recommended salary range.*

The remainder of this brief report includes a review of the methodology and summaries from each section of the survey.

Editor's note: This article is part one of a two-part series on Profile 2006–2007, a survey of IABC members on the state of the communication profession. A future issue of CW will provide additional findings and commentary.

How Profile 2006–2007 was conducted

The IABC Research Foundation commissioned ResearchWorks Inc. to conduct the analysis and reporting of the 2006–2007 IABC Profile Part 1 survey. An invitation to complete the survey was sent to the entire active IABC membership (11,500 members). A total of 3,370 online surveys were completed for a final response rate of 29.3 percent. The surveys were completed between 2 November 2006 and 22 January 2007.

The survey consisted of closed-end questions regarding members' organizations, jobs, salaries and demographics. Salary data (base salary, variable pay) is based only on respondents who reported a valid salary and were full-time or full-time equivalent and worked at least 35 hours per week. The sample size for the salary base section was 3,040.

Results are weighted and presented by chapter location. Chapter location is defined as follows:

- U.S. chapters: Includes all chapters located in the U.S.
- Canada chapters: Includes all chapters located in Canada in addition to chapters located in Trinidad and Tobago, and the Caribbean.
- OUSCA chapters (outside the U.S. and Canada): Includes all IABC chapters located outside of the U.S. and Canada, including those in Europe, Asia and the Middle East.
- NR chapters (no response): Respondents included in this category did not specify the chapter to which they belong.

Survey snapshot

Survey response rate: 29.3 percent of IABC's membership

Number of responses: 3,370

Salary: The median base salary was US\$71,000, representing an average annual increase of nearly 6.7 percent since the 2002 IABC Profile study. The median variable pay was US\$10,000 in 2006.

Gender: Three-quarters of respondents (76 percent) were female, as in 2002.

Age: The median age was 40; the mean age was 41. Nearly seven in 10 respondents (68 percent) were 36 years of age or older.

Education level: Six out of 10 respondents (59 percent) reported the highest level of education completed was university/ bachelor's degree. Twenty-eight percent responded that they had a master's degree, while 2 percent had a doctoral degree.

Experience level: Survey respondents were experienced communicators; 85 percent have 10 or more years of experience.

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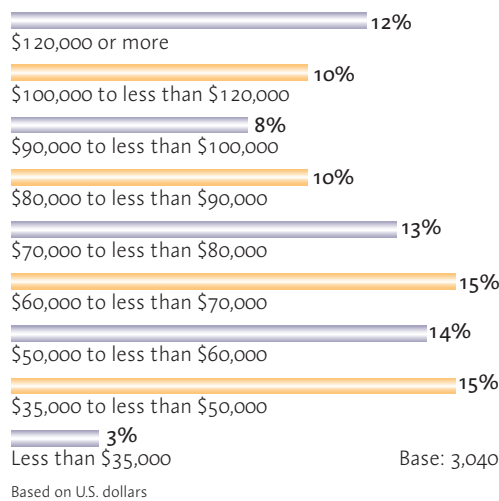
about the author

Tamara L. Gillis, Ed.D., ABC, is associate professor and chairman of the Department of Communications at Elizabethtown College in Pennsylvania. She is currently analyzing and interpreting the data gleaned from this survey for Profile Part 2, an in-depth look at the findings and what they indicate about the state of the profession.

Salary information

Two in 10 respondents (22 percent) reported earning US\$100,000 or more as a base salary. Four in 10 respondents (40 percent) reported earning a base salary of US\$80,000 or more.

2006 base salary in U.S. dollars (no variable pay)

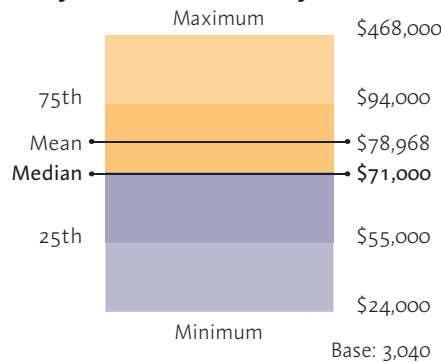


Where do you stand?

If you were an IABC member in 2006 and you earned a base salary of:

- US\$61,907, you earned more than 25 percent of survey respondents.
- US\$71,000, you earned more than 50 percent of survey respondents.
- US\$94,000, you earned more than 75 percent of survey respondents.

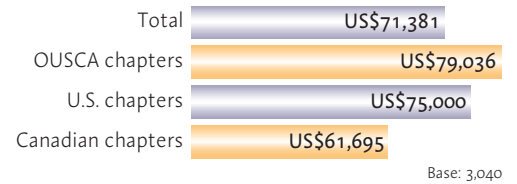
What is your annual base salary in 2006?



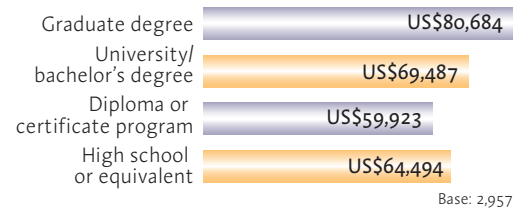
The 2006 median base salary increased by 27 percent, and the mean increased by 18 percent since the 2002 survey. (In 2002, the median IABC salary was US\$56,000, and the mean was US\$66,832. Note that unlike the 2002 study, the 2006 salary calculations only include full-time or equivalent reporting 35-plus hours per week.)

Median base salary by selected demographics

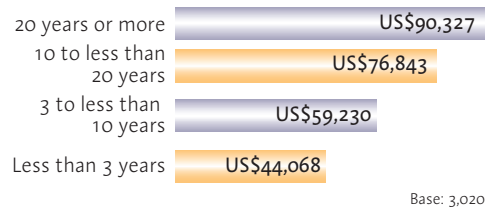
Chapter: OUSCA chapter respondents specified the highest median base salary, followed by U.S. chapter respondents and Canadian chapter respondents.



Education: As education increases, so does the median base salary. "High school or equivalent" is an exception—these respondents tended to be older and have many years of experience.



Experience: As experience increases, so does the median base salary. Respondents with 20 years or more of experience reported earning twice as much as respondents in the "less than 3 years" category.



2006 variable pay (bonus)

Six in 10 respondents (64 percent) reported they would receive variable pay in 2006.

Other salary information

- On average, IABC members received 18 annual vacation days. The mean number of vacation days varied from 22 for OUSCA chapters to 17 for U.S. chapters and 18 for Canadian chapters.
- The median self-employed hourly rate was US\$100, and the mean was US\$116.
- The median agency hourly billable rate was US\$165, and the mean was US\$204.
- Fourteen percent of respondents were compensated for overtime. Respondents from Canadian chapters (30 percent) were more likely than OUSCA chapters (12 percent) and U.S. chapters (8 percent) to be compensated for overtime.

- The majority of respondents (90 percent) reported an increase in salary over the past two years. Forty-three percent received an increase of 10 percent or more, and 47 percent received a 1 percent to less than 10 percent increase.
- Almost one-quarter of all respondents (23 percent) said they were “very satisfied” with their salary level.
- Six in 10 respondents (60 percent) expect a 3 percent to 5 percent pay increase at their next pay review. Two in 10 (20 percent) expect an increase of 0 percent to 2 percent, while one in 10 (10 percent) expect a 6 percent to 8 percent increase.
- Ninety percent of respondents indicated they received a medical plan as part of their benefits. OUSCA chapter respondents were much less likely (53 percent) to receive a medical plan than U.S. chapter respondents (95 percent) or Canadian chapter respondents (92 percent).
- Overall, 86 percent of survey respondents indicated that their employer paid for their benefits in 2006. Twelve percent reported they paid for their benefits themselves.

Company information

- Thirty-three percent of respondents reported their organization’s scope of operations was worldwide.
- The most often mentioned industry or sector was finance/banking (10 percent). Government/military (7 percent) and medical/health care (7 percent) tied for second.
- Sixty-one percent of survey respondents reported working for an organization with at least 1,000 employees. Four percent of respondents indicated they were “sole practitioners.”
- Just over half of respondents (51 percent) reported that 100 percent of their organization’s employees worked in the same country they did in 2006.
- Four in 10 respondents (41 percent) indicated that one to four communicators were employed in their department, practice or firm.
- Eighty-five percent of respondents reported that during the past two years their communication department, practice or firm’s staff/size had either increased (47 percent) or stayed the same (38 percent).
- Forty-four percent of respondents reported their department’s, practice’s or firm’s budget/revenue had increased during the past two years.

Job information

- Eighty-three percent of survey respondents said they had been working with their

current organization for less than 10 years.

- Two in 10 respondents (22 percent) reported they had been in the communication profession for 10 to 15 years. Another 22 percent had been in the communication profession for five to 10 years.
- Sixty-one percent of respondents said they had been in their current position for less than three years.
- Forty-two percent of respondents specified they did not supervise anyone in 2006. Twenty-six percent reported that they supervised one to two people.
- Ninety-four percent of respondents indicated they were employed permanently on a full-time basis in 2006.
- Ninety-one percent of respondents specified that, on average, they worked at least 40 hours per week.
- Seven percent of respondents indicated they were self-employed at the end of 2006.
- At least eight out of 10 respondents said they interact with senior management through “communication planning” (87 percent) and “developing key messages” (82 percent).
- Nearly half (49 percent) of the respondents specified they had “unlimited” interaction with senior management. Less than 1 percent of respondents reported they had no access to senior management.
- Sixty-one percent of respondents specified that they see themselves working in their present organization in two years.
- The most frequently mentioned nonfinancial incentive to leave the respondent’s current job was “opportunities for advancement” (28 percent). •

Comparison 2002 versus 2006*

	2002	2006
Median base salary	US\$56,000	US\$71,000
Received variable pay	42%	64%
Accreditation <i>(% indicating accreditation)</i>	17%	12%
Access to senior management <i>(% indicating “unlimited access”)</i>	53%	49%
Employment in two years <i>(% indicating “do not plan to work for present organization in two years”)</i>	41%	39%
Increase in staff/department size <i>(% indicating an increase in the last two years)</i>	37%	47%
Increase in budget/revenue <i>(% indicating an increase in last two years)</i>	42%	44%

*NOTE: SURVEY DESIGN WAS NOT IDENTICAL IN 2002 AND 2006. USE CAUTION WHEN INTERPRETING RESULTS.

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Accreditation: 12 percent of respondents were accredited; 9 percent were ABCs, and the remaining 3 percent are accredited through another organization.

Focus of work: The most frequently mentioned function/department was internal communication (29 percent) followed by corporate communication (18 percent). External communication and advertising/marketing communication tied for third with 9 percent.

Access to senior management: 49 percent of respondents indicated direct access to senior management.

Supervisory responsibility: Compared with the 2002 survey, more respondents were responsible for supervising others (58 percent versus 46 percent).

Geographic location: The majority of respondents were from the U.S. (63 percent), followed by Canada (26 percent), and outside of U.S. and Canada at 9 percent. Two percent of respondents did not indicate geographic chapter location.

Organization membership: 52 percent of respondents indicated that they only belong to IABC.