

# First global survey on Corporate Responsibility in Advertising. **2022**



X



International non-profit organisation, ACT Responsible, and Nielsen announce the results of their global survey on corporate responsibility in the advertising industry.

# The Survey



## global survey on corporate responsibility

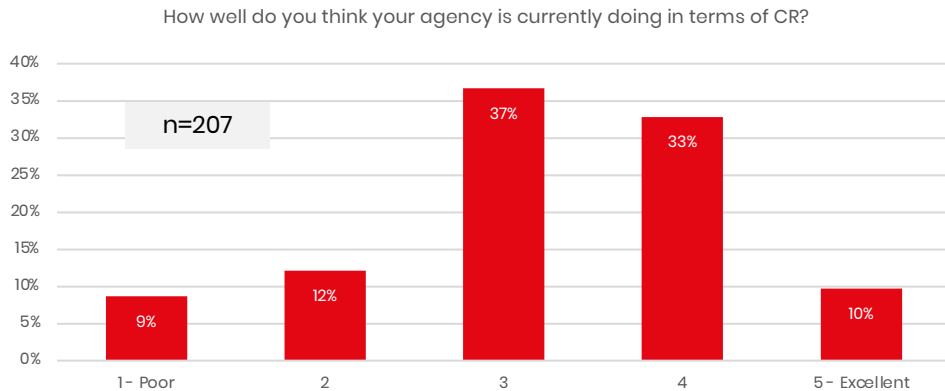
The aim of this survey is to highlight how advertising agencies embrace corporate responsibility, as economic, social and environmental actors. The information was collected between March and May 2022.

The survey was distributed to senior leadership teams around the world by ACT Responsible Advisory Board members\*. It contained 45 questions divided in 6 sections covering Corporate Responsibility with regards to environmental, social, company and product policies.

\* Advisory Board including the International Advertising Association (IAA), AdForum, Havas Group, Interpublic Group (IPG), Publicis Groupe, WPP Group, Anomaly, FCB, Grey Group, McCann Worldgroup, TBWA Worldwide, and Wunderman Thompson, with the support of the American Association of Advertising Agencies (4A's) and the French Association of Communication Agencies (AACC).

# Agency – self evaluation

Agencies feel that they are doing well on CR



Overall, most agencies feel that they are doing well in this area, with some **80% stating that they do an average, good or excellent job.**

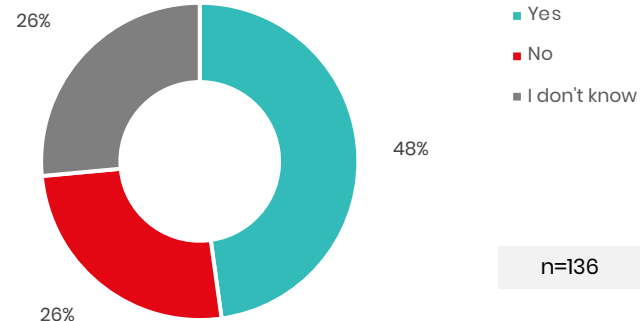


# Agency – self evaluation

Agencies feel that they are doing well on CR, but less than ½ track progress



Does your agency keep track of its progress on these policies/initiatives?



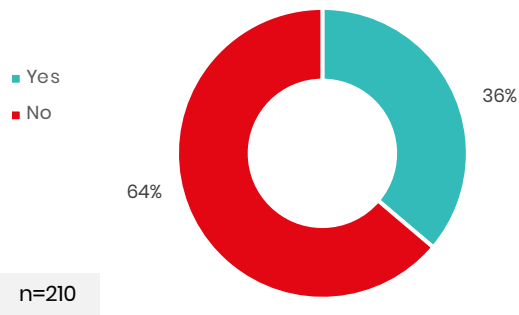
However, **fewer than half (48%)** claim that they track or regulate adherence to or progress of their policies.

# Agency – self evaluation

>1/3 have a dedicated CR team

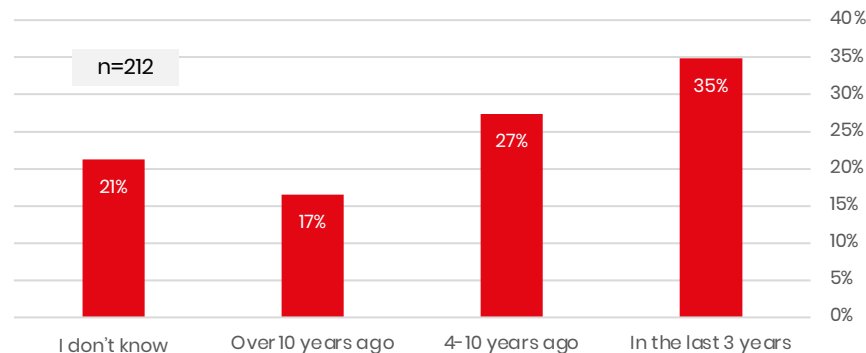
& >1/3 only started focusing on CR in past 3 years

Does your agency have a specific division or team that is responsible for Corporate Responsibility (CR)?



36% of agencies have a team dedicated to Corporate Responsibility

When would you say CR became a concern in your agency?



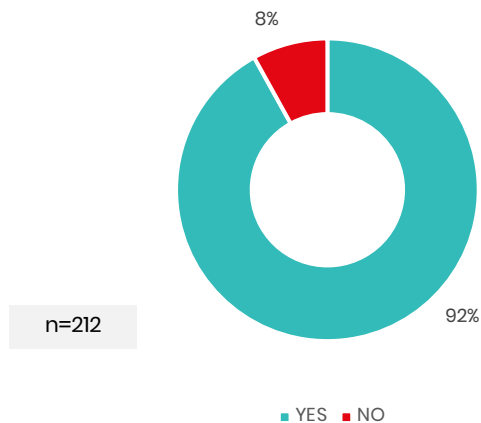
For 35% of agencies, Corporate Responsibility only became a concern in the last 3 years. Almost 1 in 5 (17%) agencies say that they have had a CR agenda for 10 years or more.

# Agency – self evaluation

Nearly all agencies now do pro-bono work



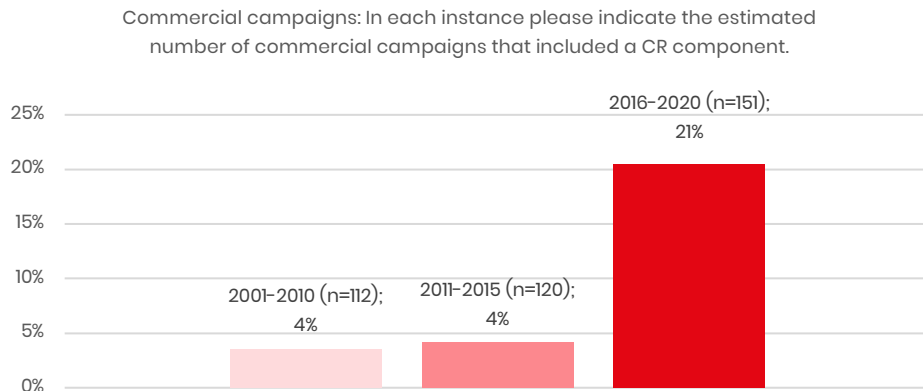
Does your agency do ANY pro-bono work (2016-2020)



Only 8% of responders said that their agency does NO pro-bono work

# Agency – self evaluation

There has been a huge increase since 2001 in briefs with CR components



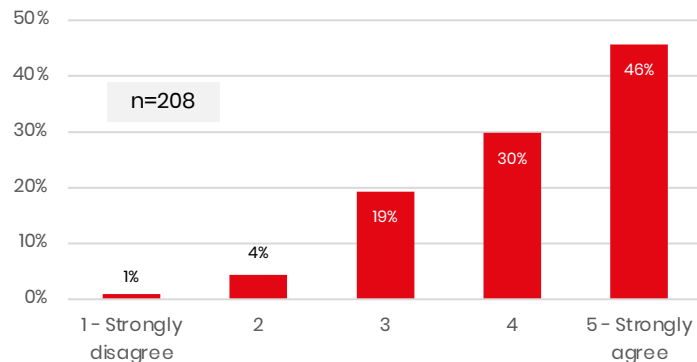
The number of respondents who said that many or most briefs contain a CR component has risen dramatically from just 4% between 2001-2015, to 21% between 2016 and 2020.

# CR in the agency setting

Agencies understand that responsibility for CR lies with them



Do you believe it's the agency's role to give clients CR advice for their campaigns?

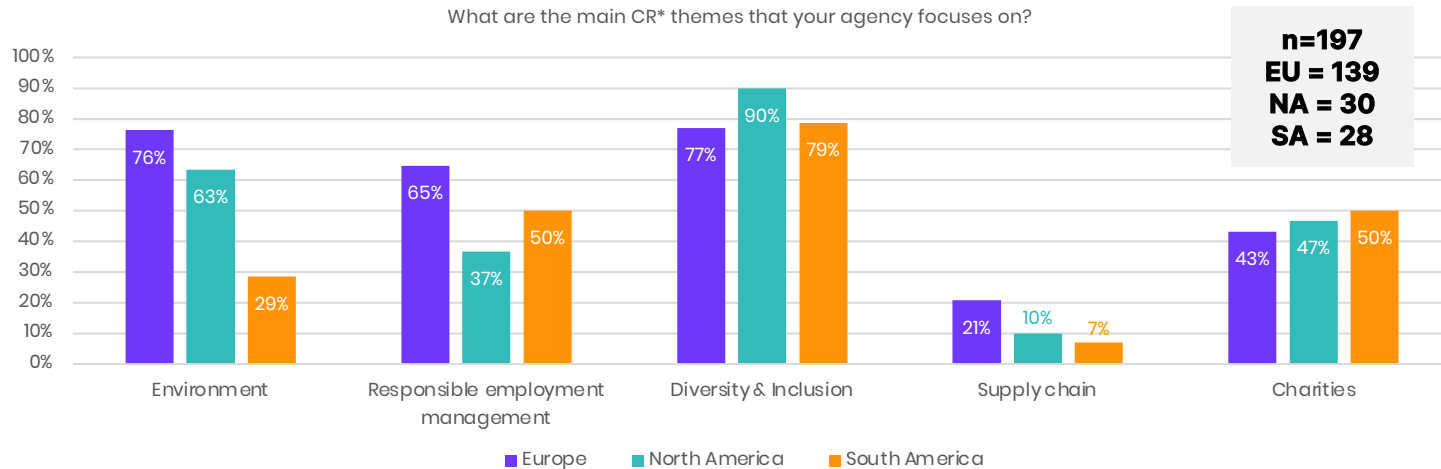


Almost half (46%) of respondents strongly agree that it is the responsibility of agencies to offer CR advice to clients



# CR in the agency setting

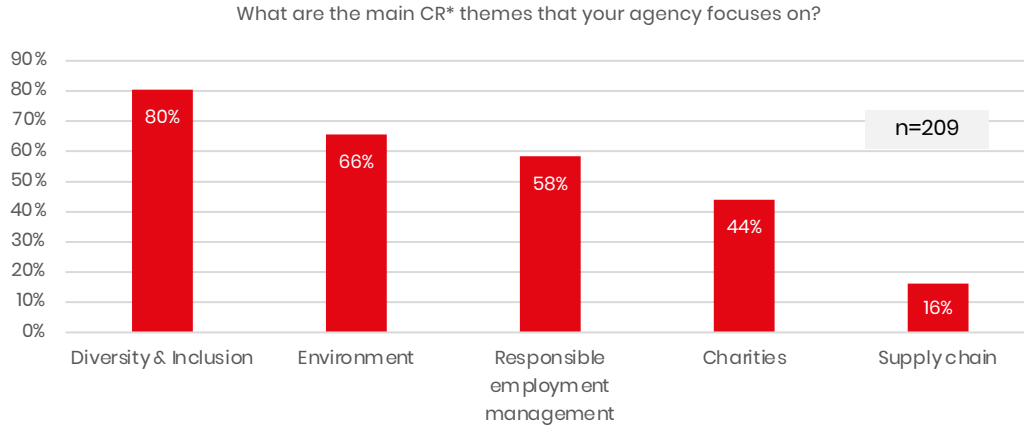
European and US agencies have different priorities for CR theme focus



The environment is a priority focus for the EU and US, more so than for South America. America (especially the North) is less focussed on employee management than the EU. The US leads the way on diversity & inclusion. The EU is slightly behind North and South America in terms of charity focus.

# CR in the agency setting

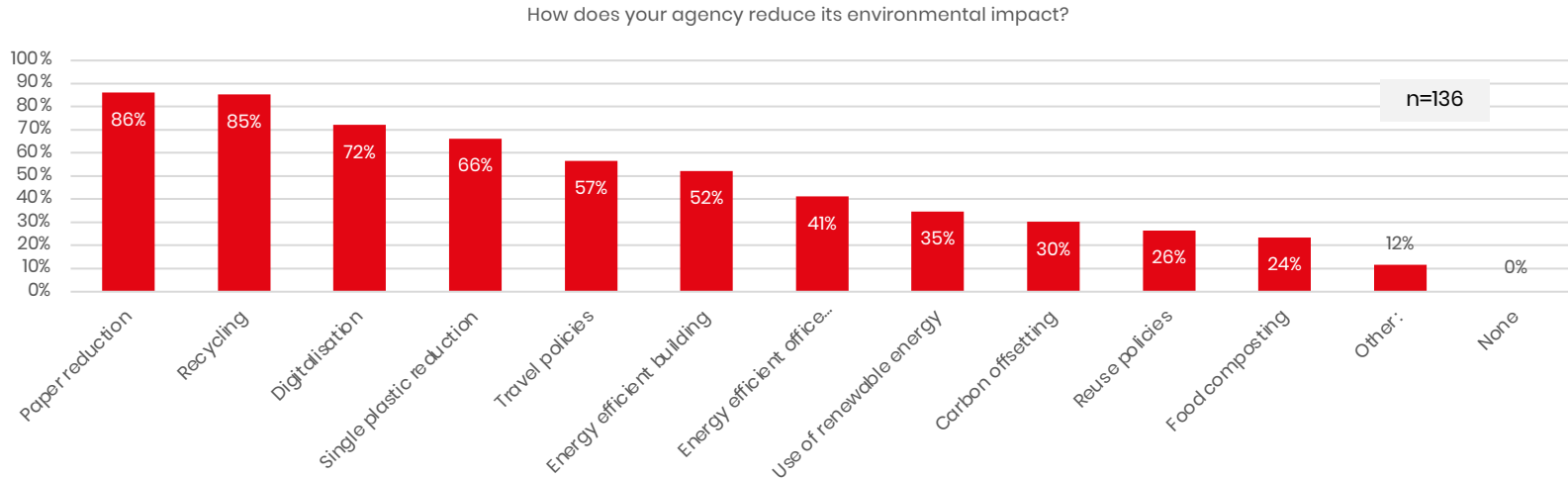
Diversity and inclusion is the main CR theme for most agency



Diversity and inclusion stands as the key theme for 80% of respondents. The environment follows with 66% identifying this theme as central in their agency. 58% identify responsible employee management, and 44% identify supporting charities. Responsible supply chain management remains a low priority, with only 16% recognising it as a key theme.

# CR in the agency setting

## Environment – Agencies' focus on mainstream environmental tactics

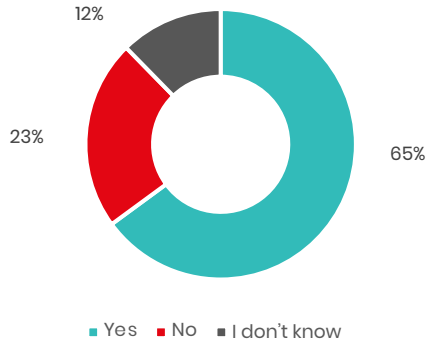


Among the most reported initiatives are paper and plastic reduction, recycling and digitalisation. While these are necessary first steps, they remain mainstream and easier transitions that have been on the agenda for longer; further policies are still slow to be implemented.

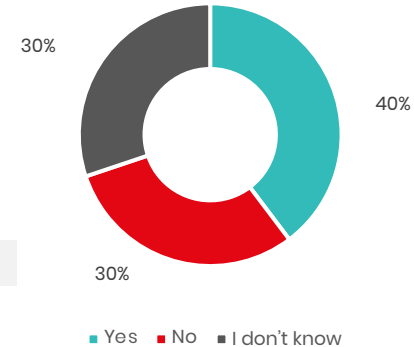
# CR in the agency setting

Environment – Agencies have policies but few have a carbon-neutral target

Has your agency developed policies or programs to reduce its environmental footprint?



Has your agency set a carbon neutral target?

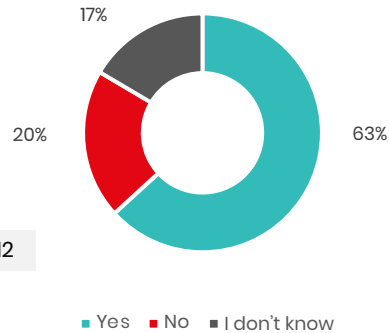


On the environmental side, despite a majority (65%) reporting that they have programmes in place to reduce their environmental footprint, only 48% report that their agency actually tracks or regulates progress on these policies, and only 40% are aware of a carbon-neutral target.

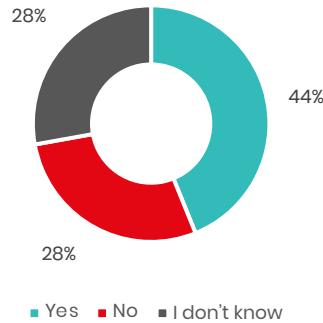
# CR in the agency setting

Social – Agencies support charities and have ethical supplier codes

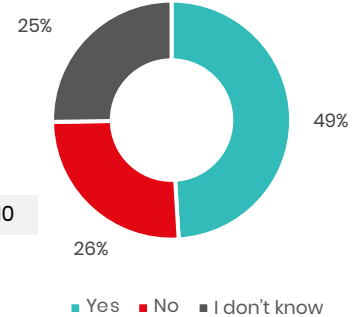
Does your agency actively encourage working with charities?



Does your agency financially support charities?



Do you have a code of ethics for suppliers?

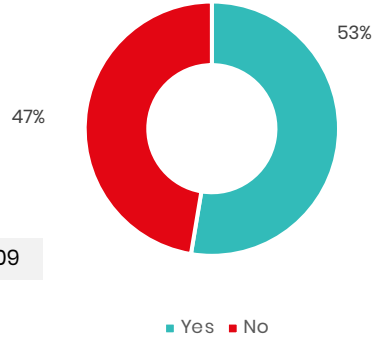


More positively, results show agencies to be more proactive in social aspects. For instance, **63% report that their agency actively encourages working with charities, and 44% that their agency financially supports charities regularly. Almost half of respondents are aware of a code of ethics for suppliers, larger agencies having paved the way in earlier years, and smaller ones now following their steps.**

# CR in the agency setting

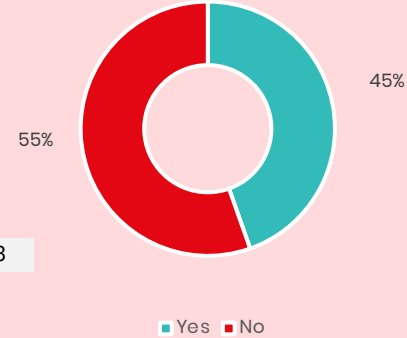
Larger agencies tend to publish more CR materials & documents than others

Does your agency publish any materials or documents about CR?



Larger agencies  
down-weighted  
in analysis

Does your agency publish any materials or documents about CR?



Over half (53%) of respondents told us that their agency publishes materials and/or documentation relating to CR. When most of the respondents from the largest 4 agencies are removed, that number drops to 45%. Smaller agencies possibly lack the necessary resources to do so.

# Key Findings & What's next?

The power of this survey will grow with each iteration as we monitor change

- The 2021/2 survey comprised 212 responses from 110 agencies in 40 countries, and ran from March to May 2022.
- Most agencies accept that responsibility for CR is theirs and feel that they are doing well in CR, but less than 1/2 track progress
- 1/3 + have only focussed on CR in the past 3 years.
- > 1/3 have a dedicated CR team/department
- Agencies have been slower to focus on supply-chain ethics than inclusion & diversity and the environment.
- There are differences between EU / Americas CR approaches & focus. South America lags behind on environmental focus. The EU leads the way on responsible employee management and the environment, whilst the US leads on diversity and inclusion.

# Key Findings & What's next?

The power of this survey will grow with each iteration as we monitor change

- Nearly 2/3 of respondent agencies have an environmental policy but only 4 out of 10 have set a carbon neutral target. Agencies are making changes to help the environment, but are generally taking the easiest options.
- >9 out of 10 responders' agencies do pro-bono work.
- Most agencies work with charities and almost half support charities financially.
- Few agencies seek outside advice on CR, and the help they receive is generally ranked as average-good
- Smaller agencies lack resource to product CR documentation and materials. Support and guidance would be very beneficial to these agencies



“

Nielsen is pleased to support such an important piece of insight into the practices of the ad community on social responsibility & sustainable development. The findings have been encouraging and enlightening and now form a solid foundation from which we can all continue to grow and improve.

This research paves the way for agencies and advertisers alike to recognise and re-engage with the world around us in a positive, responsible way. We look forward to seeing the cooperation and advancements this research will bring to bear”.

**Cathy Heeley**

*International Media Analytics Lead @ Nielsen  
Contact : [cathy.heeley@nielsen.com](mailto:cathy.heeley@nielsen.com)*

“We believe ad agencies are key players to in driving the Corporate Responsibility agenda. Getting the industry to walk the talk in sustainability is essential.

The findings shows that the topic has really kicked in, but to make sure agencies feel they are doing an excellent work in the future they will need to measure their progress. Working together to track core KPIs will allow us to take our actions to the next level.

We are grateful to the Nielsen team for its commitment this important project and hope will be the start of a long collaboration”.

**Isabel Kurata**

*Co-founder – ACT Responsible  
Contact : [isa@act-responsible.org](mailto:isa@act-responsible.org)*

”

