IPSOS WHITE PAPER

The Economic Impact of Public Relations in India

Measuring the contribution of reputation, revenue sustainability and crisis management to enterprise value

Prepared by Ipsos, September 2026

Abstract

This paper presents an economic assessment of the public relations industry in India, drawing on two bodies of work conducted by Ipsos for the Public Relations Consultants Association of India (PRCAI): the Economic Impact of Public Relations study and the SPRINT 2026 industry report, Architects of Trust. The central finding is that an industry with revenues of US$ 340 million (INR 3,230 crores) in FY2026 influences approximately US$ 545 billion of economic value each year, through three levers: the sustenance of revenue through brand awareness (approximately US$ 220 billion), the management of corporate reputation as an investor-facing asset (approximately US$ 265 billion), and the mitigation of losses during crises (approximately US$ 60 billion). The paper sets out the estimation methodology in full, reports the findings as interpreted in the underlying study, identifies where demand for each lever is heading, and closes with the assumptions on which the estimates rest.

1. Introduction

Public relations has historically been measured by its outputs. Coverage volumes, share of voice and engagement rates remain the dominant metrics in the Indian industry. What these metrics do not capture is the economic function the discipline performs: the creation and protection of intangible value for the firms that use it.

This paper addresses that gap. It asks two questions. First, what is the scale and structure of the Indian public relations industry in economic terms? Second, what is the magnitude of the economic value that public relations activity influences, and through which mechanisms?

The answers rest on a defined evidence base. The SPRINT 2026 report surveyed 143 respondents across the industry, from mid and senior consultancy professionals to decision-makers and human resource and finance heads, supplemented by in-depth qualitative interviews. The Economic Impact study combined a primary survey of 500 Indian consumers, Ipsos's point of view, sector-level revenue and market capitalisation analysis, and secondary benchmarks. Both were conducted by Ipsos, and findings are reported throughout as estimated and interpreted in those studies.

The estimates at a glance

Lever	Value base	PR share applied	Estimated impact
Revenue sustainability and growth	US$ 1.2 trillion organised sector base	~20% of brand awareness	~US$ 220 billion on revenue
Reputation management	US$ 4.5 to 4.75 trillion listed market capitalisation	~28% investor influence × 20% PR share	~US$ 265 billion on market capitalisation
Crisis management	Revenue and market capitalisation of sectors in scope	0.35% revenue and 1.5% market cap erosion	~US$ 60 billion on revenue and market capitalisation

Source: Ipsos and PRCAI, Economic Impact of Public Relations study, 2026.

2. The Industry in Economic Terms

2.1 Scale and growth

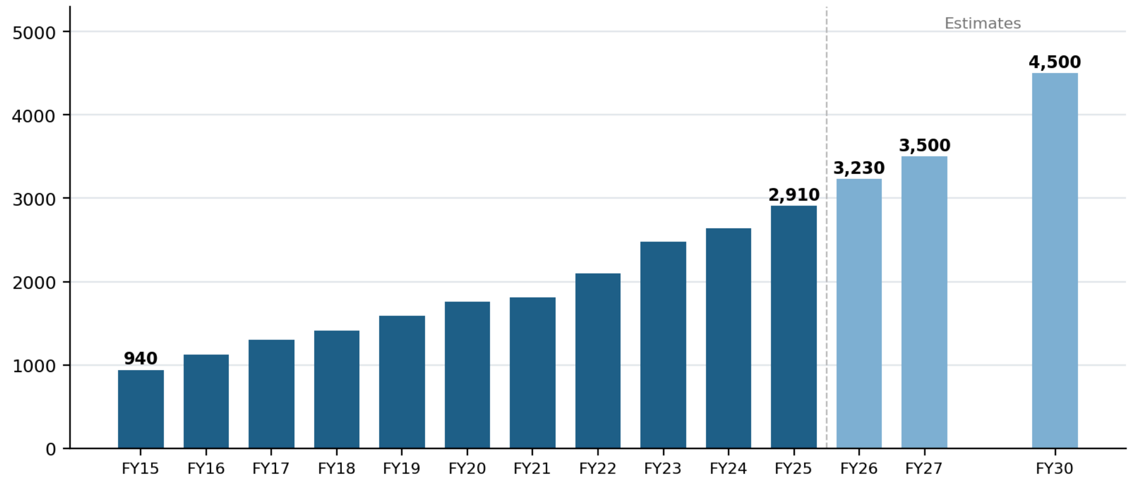
The Indian public relations industry earned revenues of US$ 340 million (INR 3,230 crores) in FY2026, a growth of 11 per cent over the previous year, giving India a 12.6 per cent share of the Asia-Pacific market of US$ 2.70 billion, itself 12 per cent of a global market of US$ 22.54 billion. With the global market growing at 6 per cent over 2024, Indian growth runs at nearly twice the global rate.

Growth is moderating from a high base. The industry recorded a compound annual growth rate of 12 per cent between FY2015 and FY2025, over which period revenue rose from US$ 99.08 million to US$ 306.71 million, and projections place it at US$ 368.90 million in FY2027 and US$ 474.30 million by FY2030. The moderation mirrors global trends and signals a maturing industry.

Figure 1

A maturing engine

Indian public relations industry revenues, Rs crore



FY26 onwards are estimates. CAGR FY15 to FY25: 12%.
Source: PRCAI, Ipsos and Astrum, SPRINT 2026

2.2 Structure and concentration

The market is large but unequal. Four giant firms with turnover above US$ 10.54 million, eight large firms and 22 mid-sized firms occupy the top tier, and 12 firms control roughly 70 per cent of the market, while more than 145 emerging firms and over 500 micro consultancies compete below. Concentration has intensified: the giant segment's revenue share rose from 44.2 per cent in FY2023 to an estimated 54.4 per cent in FY2026, and large and mid-sized firms are growing at an estimated 12.4 per cent in FY2026, above the industry average of 11 per cent.

3. Measuring Economic Impact: Methodology

The Economic Impact study estimates the value that public relations influences annually through three levers, each estimated separately with its own scope, data sources and calculation logic. This section reports the methodology in full, since the rigour of the estimates depends on the transparency of their construction.

3.1 Revenue sustainability and growth

The first lever captures the contribution of public relations to business continuity by isolating its role in building and sustaining brand awareness, and in turn, ongoing revenues. The estimation proceeded in three steps.

Scope was defined first. Nine sectors were identified from the PRCAI-Ipsos SPRINT body of work as the biggest users of public relations activity: FMCG and food and beverages, IT and software services, hospitality and tourism, aviation, banking and financial services, automotive, education and edtech, healthcare and pharmaceuticals, and startups, tech unicorns and e-commerce. These nine sectors account for approximately 80 per cent of total public relations activity. Sector sizes were mapped using Ipsos's body of knowledge, and the remaining 20 per cent of activity was extrapolated proportionally, giving an adjusted aggregate sector size of approximately US$ 1.2 trillion, the organised segment of the economy covered in the analysis.

The second step linked public relations to brand awareness through a primary survey of 500 Indian consumers, reflecting the country's urban consumption base, working-age population and balanced gender profile. Respondents were shown the top brands in each sector, together accounting for approximately 80 per cent of sector revenue, and asked about their familiarity with each and the channels through which they had encountered it. Channels were classified into three groups: those used only by public relations, such as journalist-led news coverage, trade publications, leadership interviews and analyst commentary; those used only by corporate communications and marketing teams, such as advertising and the company website; and shared channels such as events, influencer content, social media and word of mouth. The classification was validated by senior communications professionals. For channels used only by public relations, the full share of responses was attributed to the discipline; for shared channels, weights were applied based on Ipsos expertise and senior communications validation. On this basis, the contribution of public relations to brand awareness was estimated at approximately 20 per cent.

The third step applied this 20 per cent share to the US$ 1.2 trillion organised sector base, yielding an estimated contribution to revenue sustainability and growth of approximately US$ 220 billion.

3.2 Reputation management

The second lever treats reputation as an investor-facing metric that influences how markets value a company's future potential. The investor market was defined as the market capitalisation of publicly listed companies in India, estimated at approximately US$ 4.5 to 4.75 trillion as per the BSE. The study drew on published investor-relations research, which finds that approximately 28 per cent of investor decision-making is influenced by a company's reputation. Because reputation is shaped through both brand-led and public relations-led communication effort, the study applied the same 20 per cent share established in the awareness analysis to isolate the contribution of public relations to reputation building. On these assumptions, the economic impact of public relations-driven reputation management was estimated at approximately US$ 265 billion.

3.3 Crisis management

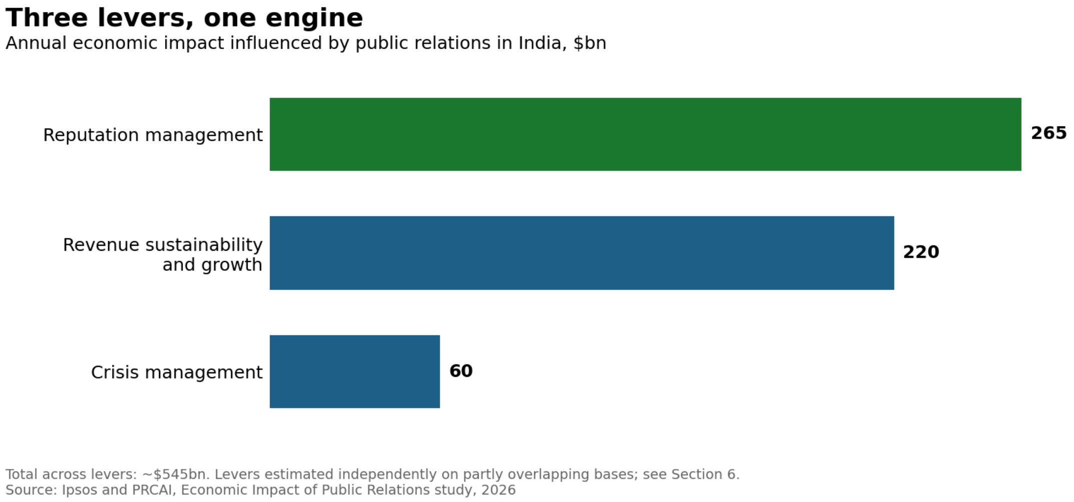
The third lever quantifies the revenue and market capitalisation at risk during corporate crises, on the premise that these losses reflect the cost incurred in the absence of public relations involvement. The study identified the top revenue-generating brands across the nine sectors in scope and analysed more than ninety major crisis events involving these brands over the last ten years, using publicly available data to measure losses during each episode. The crises observed included brand backlash, product safety failures, operational disruptions, governance and financial misconduct, cyber incidents, and market and business model shocks. Across all crises studied, the average impact was 0.35 per cent revenue erosion and 1.5 per cent market capitalisation erosion. Applying these rates to the revenue base and to the market capitalisation of the sectors in scope produced an estimated economic impact of approximately US$ 60 billion.

4. Findings

4.1 The aggregate picture

Taken together, the three levers place the annual economic impact influenced by public relations work in India at approximately US$ 545 billion. Revenue sustainability and growth accounts for approximately US$ 220 billion on revenue, reputation management for approximately US$ 265 billion on market capitalisation, and crisis management for approximately US$ 60 billion on revenue and market capitalisation. Reputation management is the largest of the three levers, which supports the study's framing of reputation as a financial asset rather than a perceptual one.

Figure 2

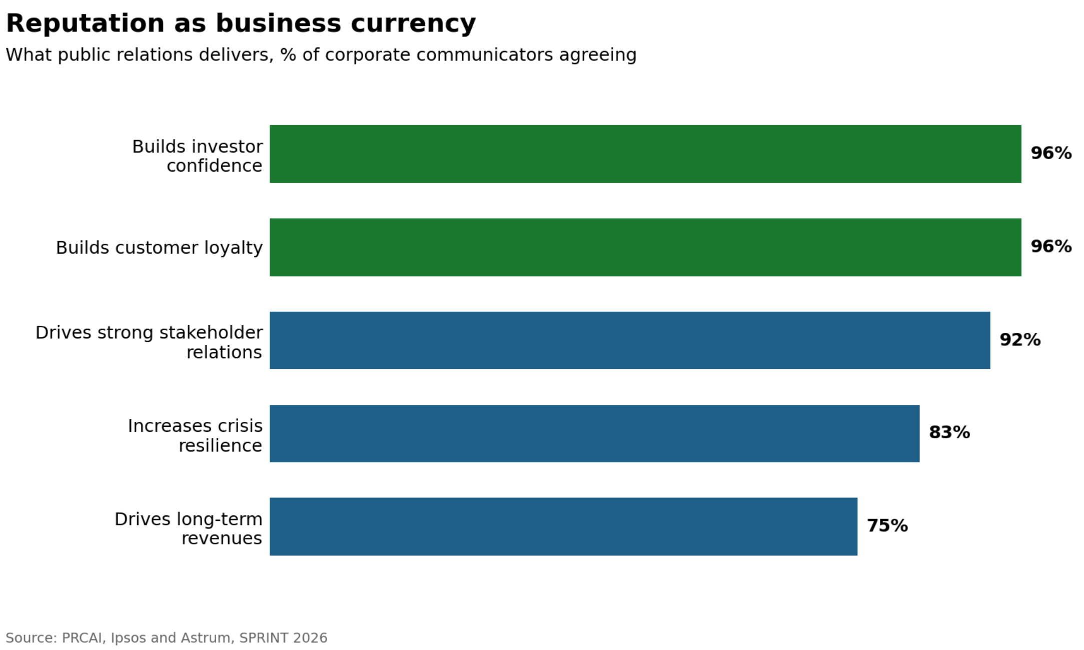


> *An industry earning US$ 340 million in revenue influences approximately US$ 545 billion in economic value each year.*

4.2 Reputation as business currency

The survey evidence is consistent with the estimates. An overwhelming 96 per cent of corporate communicators believe public relations builds investor confidence and customer loyalty, 92 per cent say it strengthens stakeholder relationships, 83 per cent link strong reputation management to greater crisis resilience, and 75 per cent recognise its contribution to long-term revenue growth. As the study concludes, reputation is no longer an intangible asset; it is a form of business currency with a direct effect on enterprise value.

Figure 3



Practitioner consensus on the mechanism is equally strong. All surveyed practitioners agreed that public relations creates economic impact by building brand equity and reputation, and all agreed that public relations-led crisis management protects reputation and minimises revenue loss. Further, 83 per cent said corporate chief executives now recognise the strategic and economic impact of the discipline, and 57 per cent report that chief executives' expectations of public relations support for reputation building are higher than ever before. Asked where public relations drives the strongest economic impact today, practitioners pointed first to brand trust and reputation, cited by 79 per cent, and then to crisis management, cited by 55 per cent.

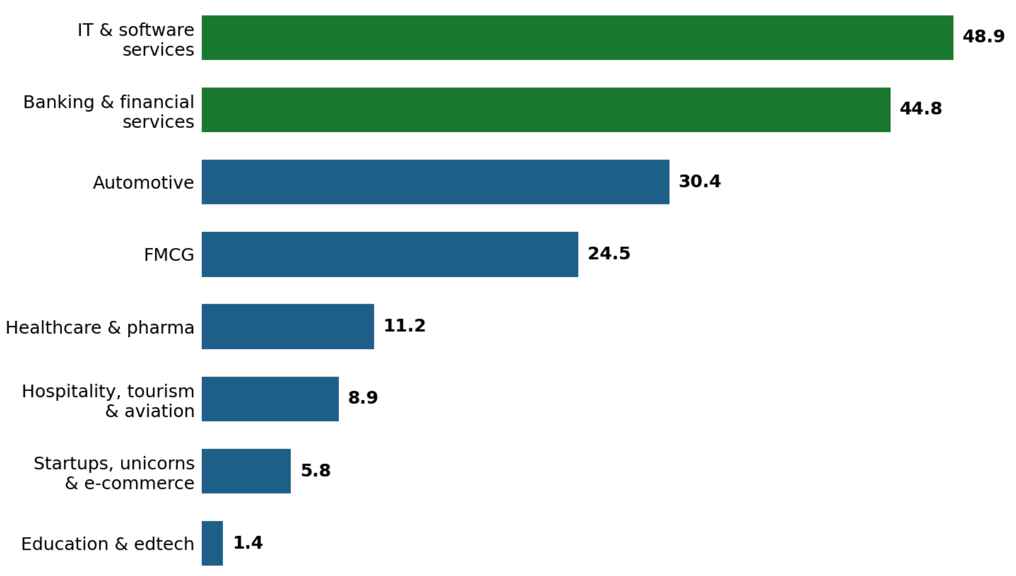
4.3 The sector composition of the estimates

The study's sector views show where the value it measures is concentrated. Within the revenue sustainability lever, the largest contributions sit in IT and software services at approximately US$ 48.9 billion and banking and financial services at US$ 44.8 billion, followed by automotive at US$ 30.4 billion and FMCG at US$ 24.5 billion. Healthcare and pharmaceuticals account for US$ 11.2 billion, hospitality, tourism and aviation, reported here as a single group, for US$ 8.9 billion, startups, tech unicorns and e-commerce for US$ 5.8 billion, and education and edtech for US$ 1.4 billion. These directly sized sectors total approximately US$ 176 billion, or 80 per cent of the lever, consistent with their 80 per cent share of public relations activity; the remaining 20 per cent of the US$ 220 billion is the proportional extrapolation described in Section 3.1.

Figure 4

Where continuity is worth most

Revenue sustainability and growth lever, sector view, $bn



Directly sized sectors total ~$176bn, 80% of the ~$220bn lever; the balance is the proportional extrapolation in Section 3.1.
Source: Ipsos and PRCAI, Economic Impact of Public Relations study, 2026

4.4 Value at risk during crises

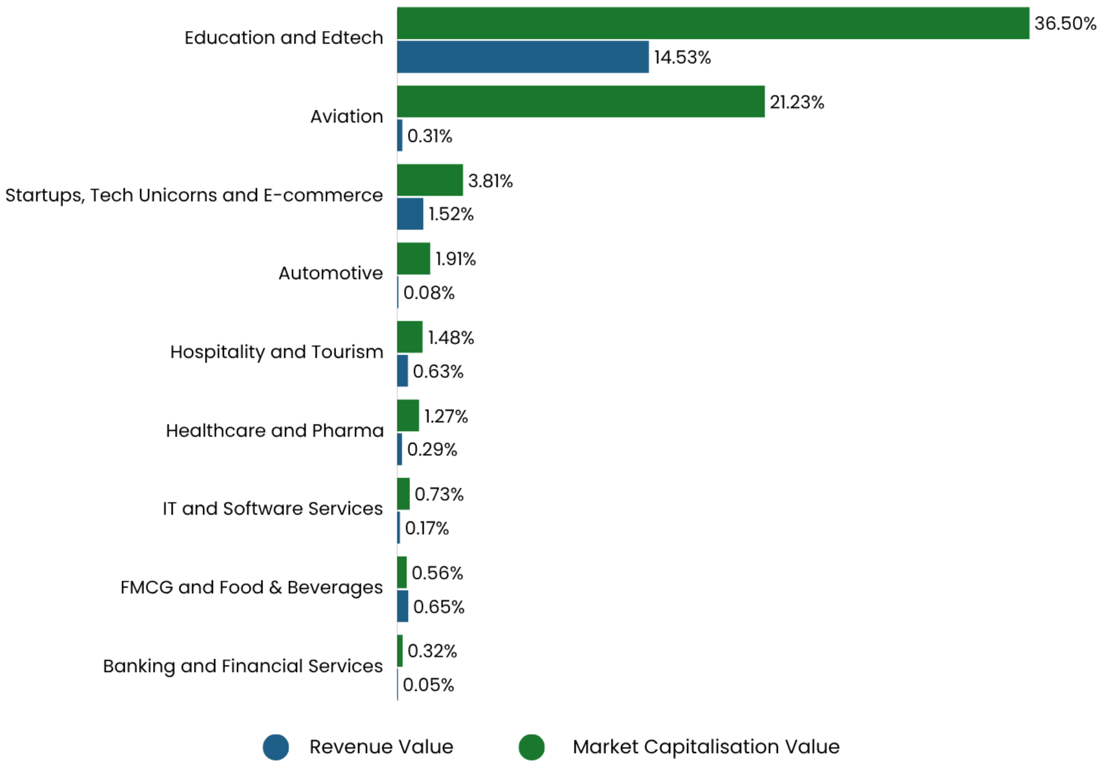
Within the crisis lever, the study disaggregates the US$ 60 billion of annual value at risk into approximately US$ 4 billion of revenue and approximately US$ 56 billion of market capitalisation. These are the losses observed across the crises studied and, on the study's premise, the value that public relations involvement protects.

In absolute terms, value at risk is led by startups, tech unicorns and e-commerce at approximately US$ 12.8 billion a year, followed by aviation at US$ 8.9 billion and healthcare and pharmaceuticals at US$ 7.2 billion. Measured instead as a share of each sector's base, the ranking changes. Education and edtech leads at 14.53 per cent of revenue and 36.50 per cent of market capitalisation, though this reflects a comparatively small industry base rather than absolute exposure. Aviation follows, with revenue value at risk of 0.31 per cent and market capitalisation value at risk of 21.23 per cent. Startups, tech unicorns and e-commerce stand at 1.52 per cent of revenue and 3.81 per cent of market capitalisation, automotive at 0.08 per cent and 1.91 per cent, hospitality and tourism at 0.63 per cent and 1.48 per cent, healthcare and pharma at 0.29 per cent and 1.27 per cent, IT and software services at 0.17 per cent and 0.73 per cent, FMCG and food and beverages at 0.65 per cent and 0.56 per cent, and banking and financial services at 0.05 per cent and 0.32 per cent. As with the revenue lever, the sector analysis is limited to select sectors and the figures do not aggregate to the headline total. Practitioner opinion reinforces the finding: 70 per cent of surveyed leaders identify reputation as bearing the highest economic damage when a crisis is not managed effectively, followed by customer trust at 66 per cent and stock price or valuation at 40 per cent.

Figure 5

When crisis hits, the cost is real

Value at risk during crises, sector view, share of each sector's base



Source: Ipsos and PRCAI, Economic Impact of Public Relations study, 2026

5. Where the Levers Are Heading

The estimates in Section 4 describe the value public relations influences today. The SPRINT 2026 evidence shows where demand for each of the three levers is moving. Four shifts stand out. Crisis management is becoming a retained service rather than an episodic one. Reputation has moved up the chief executive's agenda and is drawing budget from adjacent disciplines. Earned media is gaining weight as artificial intelligence changes how brands are discovered. And the industry delivering these levers is itself changing shape, in its service mix, its geography and its client base.

> *Public relations' share of marketing budgets rose from 12 per cent in FY2025 to 14 per cent in FY2026. Within three years, 47 per cent of consultancy heads expect crisis and issue management to be a top revenue service, up from 38 per cent today.*

5.1 Crisis management moves from episodic to retained

The crisis lever is the smallest of the three at approximately US$ 60 billion, and the one with the clearest growth signal. Crisis and issue management is cited as a top revenue service by 38 per cent of consultancy heads today and is expected to be cited by 47 per cent in three years, the largest gain of any service after digital media. Practitioners already rank it second only to brand trust and reputation as the area where public relations drives the strongest economic impact, at 55 per cent. Regional capability is part of the mechanism: 82 per cent of practitioners believe regional public relations mitigates crises through early local awareness, and regional work has risen from 10 per cent of the industry three years ago to 19 per cent today, with 25 per cent projected within three years. As more of the value at risk identified in Section 4.4 is covered by standing rather than emergency engagements, the share of losses avoided should rise.

5.2 Reputation moves up the chief executive's agenda

The reputation lever depends on how much weight company leadership places on the discipline. That weight is increasing. 83 per cent of practitioners say corporate chief executives now recognise the strategic and economic impact of public relations, and 57 per cent report that chief executives' expectations of support for reputation building are higher than ever before. The budget evidence is consistent: public relations' share of marketing budgets rose from 12 per cent in FY2025 to 14 per cent in FY2026, and just over half of corporate communicators report that it is gaining share from advertising and digital agencies as demand for integrated solutions rises. Engagement models are changing in step. 84 per cent of consultancy heads have adopted hybrid retainer-plus-project models for select clients, and 63 per cent say project-based engagements expand scope and drive revenue.

5.3 Earned media in an AI-mediated information environment

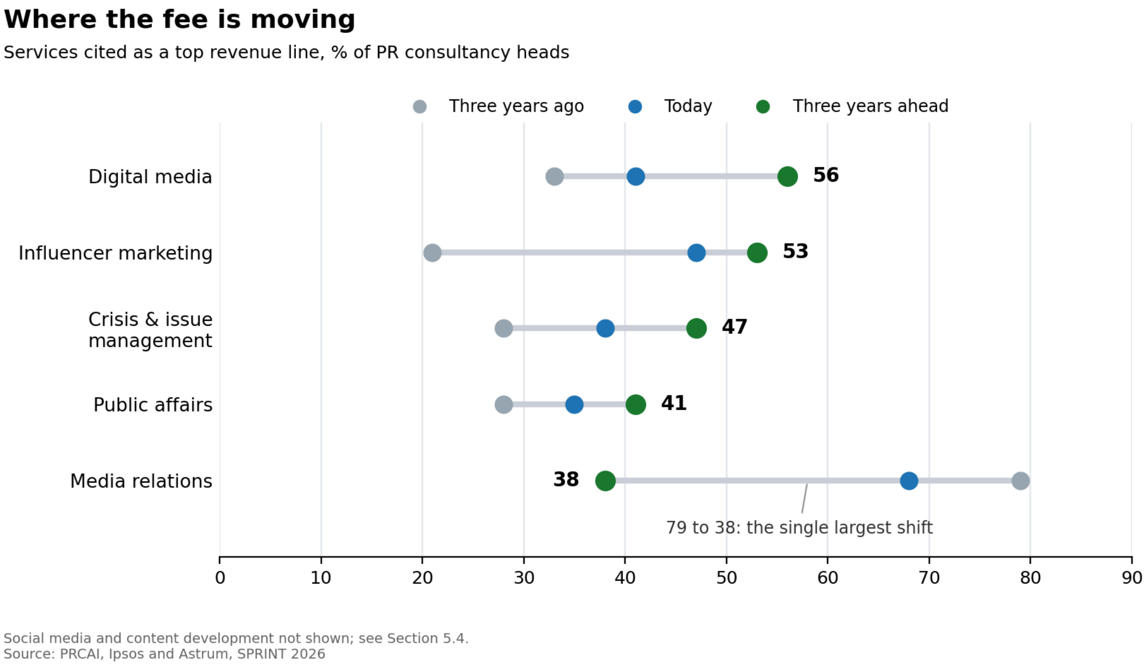
The awareness lever rests on the 20 per cent of brand awareness that public relations channels generate, led by journalist-led coverage, trade publications and leadership commentary. As large language models become gateways to information discovery, these are the sources that determine whether a brand is visible at all. 83 per cent of practitioners agree that earned media is gaining importance as these models make content discoverable, and 70 per cent regard generative engine optimisation as an emerging practice area. The report describes this as a possible new golden age for earned media, in which authority rather than volume defines influence.

This sits alongside a fall in media relations as a cited top revenue service, from 79 per cent of consultancy heads three years ago to 68 per cent today and an expected 38 per cent in three years. The two findings are compatible. The fee for placing coverage is being compressed at the same time as the economic value of credible coverage is rising, which is the pattern one would expect as basic content development is commoditised by generative AI and fees migrate to the services that decide what gets said and where.

5.4 The shape of the industry that delivers the levers

Revenue is migrating from traditional services towards newer ones (Figure 6). Alongside the decline in media relations, influencer marketing rises from 47 per cent of consultancy heads citing it as a top revenue service today to 53 per cent in three years, digital media from 41 to 56 per cent, and public affairs from 35 to 41 per cent. Social media and content development, not shown in the figure, are expected to reach approximately 47 and 25 per cent respectively; content development is the one service expected to fall below its level of three years ago, which the report attributes to generative AI producing first drafts at no cost. Measured as a share of industry revenue rather than as a service cited, influencer marketing has grown from 8 per cent three years ago to 16 per cent today, with 22 per cent projected.

Figure 6



The client base is shifting in the same direction as the levers. Startups recorded the largest gain in client demand over the last cycle, at 32 percentage points, and education and edtech gained 21; both sectors sit among the highest value-at-risk categories in Section 4.4. Government has become a material client category, rising from 4 per cent of revenue share in 2022 to 11 per cent in 2026, while pharmaceuticals and automotive lost ground. Geographically, North India leads in volume with 37 per cent of revenues, but the momentum lies in the West, growing at an estimated 19.2 per cent in FY2026, and the South, at 15.6 per cent, both well above the industry average of 11 per cent.

6. Limitations and Interpretive Boundaries

The estimates reported here are influence figures. They describe economic value that public relations activity touches and helps sustain; they are not claims that the industry generates US$ 545 billion in revenue. Three boundaries of interpretation follow from the methodology. First, the 20 per cent awareness share rests on a limited sample of 500 Indian consumers, reflecting the country's urban consumption base, working-age population and balanced gender profile, and on attribution weights for shared channels applied through Ipsos expertise and validated by senior communications professionals. Second, the reputation estimate combines the findings of existing research on investor decision-making with the same 20 per cent share to isolate the public relations contribution, an assumption carried across from the awareness analysis. Third, the crisis estimate defines the measured losses as the impact arising in the absence of public relations involvement, and is based exclusively on publicly available data on revenue and market capitalisation erosion during crisis events. Undocumented or privately managed crises have not been captured in this analysis. The sector detail covers select sectors only, which is why sector-level figures in the crisis lever do not aggregate to the headline total. In addition, the three levers are estimated independently, on bases that partly overlap, and should not be read as strictly additive; the US$ 545 billion headline is a sum of three separately modelled influence figures, not a single integrated calculation. The estimates should therefore be read as a structured, assumption-explicit quantification of influence built from primary research and secondary benchmarks, rather than as an econometric measurement of causal contribution.

7. Conclusion

The Indian public relations industry presents an unusual economic profile. Its own revenues of US$ 340 million (INR 3,230 crores) make it a small industry by national standards, while the value it influences, estimated at approximately US$ 545 billion a year, makes it a consequential one. The evidence assembled across the two studies points in one direction: reputation has become a decisive competitive advantage and a form of business currency, and public relations is the discipline through which firms build and defend it.

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