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## **Global Survey Shows Independent Public Relations Firms Experiencing a Surge in New Business**

**New York – Jan. 11, 2012** - Independent communications firms worldwide are starting off the year in better business shape than 2011, according to recent results announced today from a Worldcom Public Relations Group (Worldcom) survey. As the world's leading partnership of independently owned public relations firms, Worldcom reported most partner agencies polled forecast hiring new staff and have already experienced an increase in business and budgets as they begin the new year.

"Professional service firms worldwide are leading the pack when it comes to new hires and business growth for 2012," said Matt Kucharski, chair of Worldcom Public Relations Group and senior vice president of Padilla Speer Beardsley. "We are seeing the same trend reflected by our Worldcom partners across all regions."

Worldcom Public Relations Group surveyed CEO's from national and international partner agencies servicing clients ranging from small to mid-sized businesses to Fortune 50 companies.

The survey indicates a high percentage of new business growth in the technology, consumer, healthcare, and professional and financial service sectors; with steady growth in travel and leisure, transportation, energy, and government markets also anticipated.

The Worldcom Public Relations Group survey tapped more than 100 firms from three regions: Asia/Pacific, Europe/Middle East/Africa and North and South America on 2011-2012 business trends. Survey responses include:

- More than 76% of firms surveyed have recently hired new staff to support new business or intend to hire in Q1 of 2012.
- 67% of firms have started off 2012 in better financial/business shape than 2011.
- More than 64% of firms saw a notable surge in new business activity at the end of 2011.

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“What our Worldcom partners are reporting globally indicates markets are growing across a broad range of industries and businesses,” said Dorothy Pirovano, chair of Worldcom’s Americas Region and CEO of Public Communications Inc., Chicago. “We are finding clients to be much more optimistic moving into 2012 than they were a year ago, and while there is still some caution, there seems to be far more confidence.”

According to the survey, businesses across all sectors exhibited greater confidence in market opportunities and the value of public relations, retaining more agencies on an annual contract rather than project-by-project basis. The survey was fielded in December 2011.

About Worldcom Public Relations Group

Established in 1988, Worldcom Public Relations Group is the world’s leading partnership of independently owned public relations counseling firms, with more offices in more cities and countries than any other communications partnership. There are 107 partner agencies worldwide, in 91 markets, in 46 countries, across six continents representing more than 2,100 employees. With revenues exceeding US \$260 million, partners collectively serve national, international and multi-national clients seamlessly, while retaining the flexibility and client-service focus inherent in independent local agencies. Through Worldcom, clients have on-demand access to in-depth communications expertise from professionals who understand the language, culture and customs of the geographic arenas in which they do business.

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