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**Title**

The painters behind the profile: the rise and functioning of communication departments in universities  
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**Abstract**

It has been argued that universities are changing into becoming more professional as organizations, and this paper investigates this claim by exploring the emergence and tasks of communication departments in modern universities. Examination of universities in six Baltic and Nordic countries shows that communication departments are working closely with the institutional leadership and that communication is increasingly seen as a strategic function in the universities. This can position communication departments as a central internal coordinator between various organizational units and processes. While the findings indicate support for the assumption about more professional universities, those working within a communication department seem to have a broad and varied background and cannot be said to have developed a specific professional identity in all the institutions. However, our findings do indicate increasing contact and close relations between communication specialists across university borders which may result in a stronger professional identity over time.. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Elken, Mari, E-Mail: mari.elken@nifu.no