

CISION®

REPORT

2022

State of the Media

Insights PR Pros in the Benelux Region Need to Win Over Journalists



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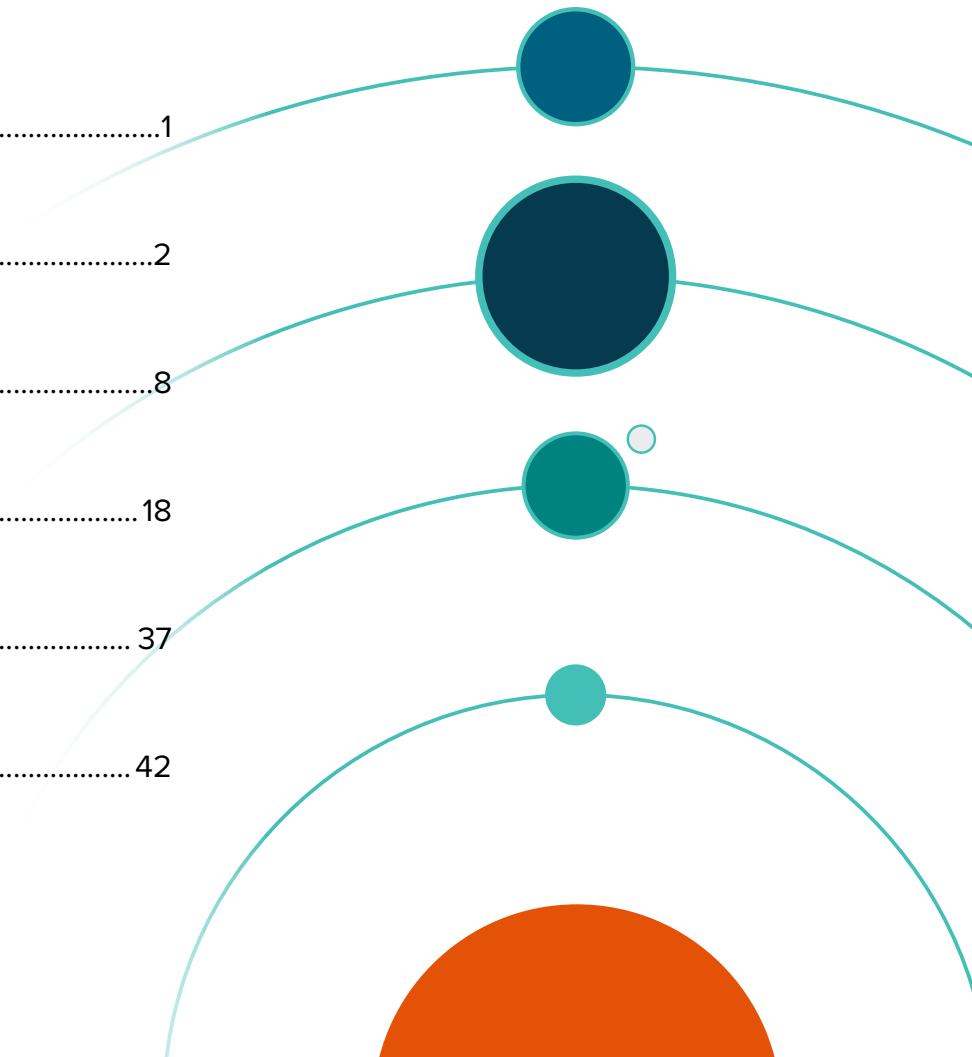
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Executive Summary

Now in its 13th year, Cision's Global State of the Media Report remains the industry standard bearer for identifying trends in journalism and opportunities for public relations professionals to partner with them efficiently and productively.

For our 2022 report, we tapped our global network of writers and editors, who for years have partnered with Cision for access to credible, trusted and newsworthy brand communications. More than 3,800 journalists across approximately 2,160 media outlets, spanning 17 regions across the world provided key insights that offer a deeper understanding of how they work, what keeps them up at night and what they really want (and need) from the PR and comms professionals they work with.

With multiple platforms that enable publicists and marketers to forge meaningful connections between media outlets and influencers, Cision is uniquely positioned to serve agencies and brands with actionable data and best practices that reflect the state of media from the journalist's perspective.



PART 1

The Changing Role of the Journalist

New Expectations, New Challenges

Essentially, the role of the journalist is the same as it has always been: To report the facts, objectively and thoroughly. Today, however, it's no longer enough to just deliver news: Journalists are under increasing pressure to think about if and how the content they produce will have impact, attract audiences, and drive engagement. Limited and declining resources, smaller staffs, and the struggle to keep up with new technologies *and* compete with social media influencers only feed into this challenge.

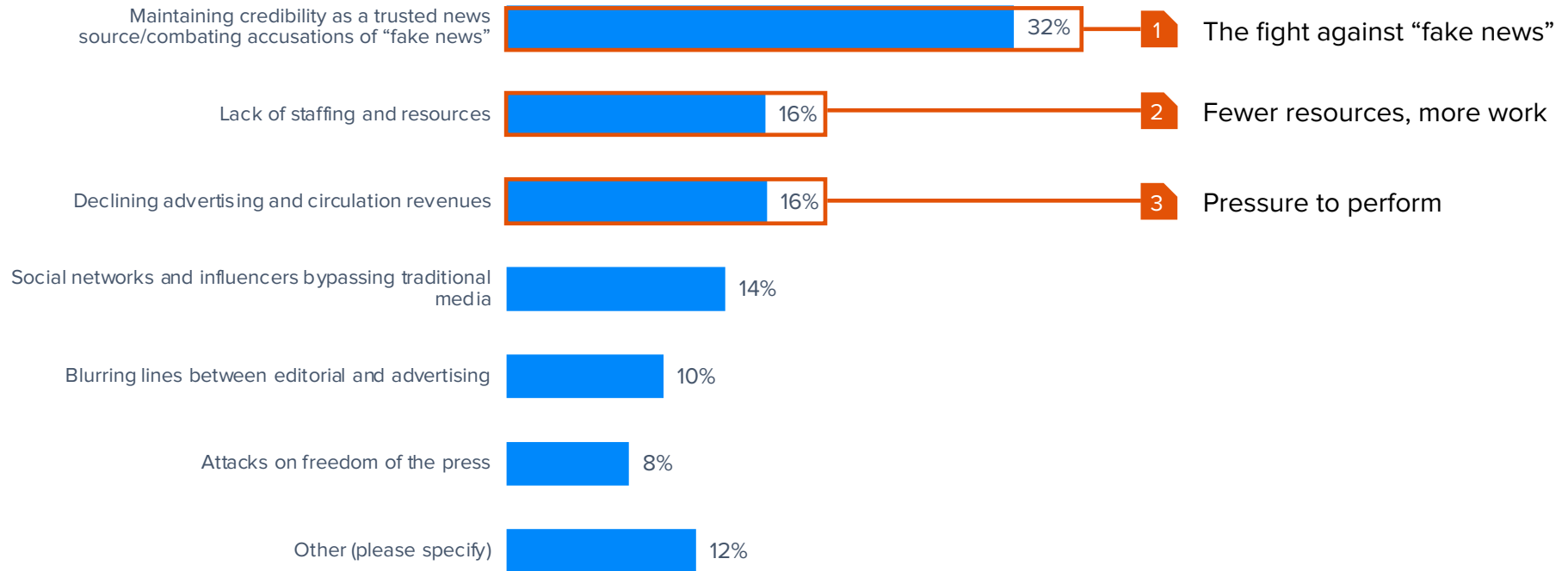
PRO TIP Exercise Empathy with Journalists

The need for public relations partners who understand these struggles, respect their time, and can provide clear, specific and targeted communications has never been greater—or more appreciated.



The Greatest Obstacles for Journalists

What do you believe was the biggest challenge for journalism in the last 12 months?

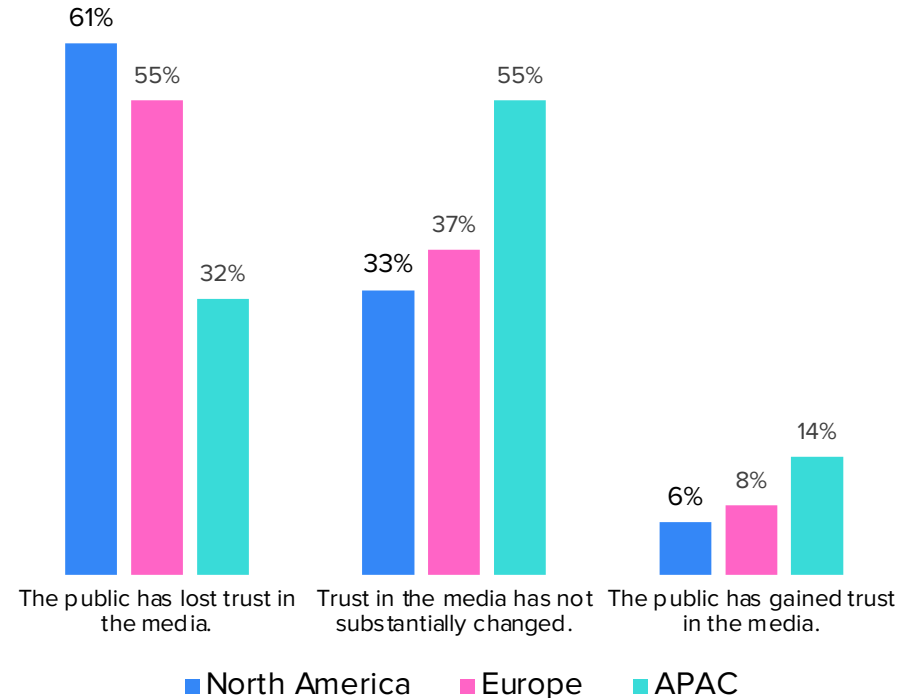


1

The fight against “fake news”

When asked what they believe was the biggest challenge for journalism in 2021, “**Maintaining credibility as a trusted news source/combating accusations of ‘fake news’**” was the top answer by far, chosen by 32% of respondents. It doesn’t help that most journalists don’t have much faith in the public’s faith in them: More than half of surveyed journalists (57%) feel the public has lost trust in the media over the past year. This is up four percentage points from the number who said the same last year.

In your opinion, has the public lost or gained trust in the media over the last year?



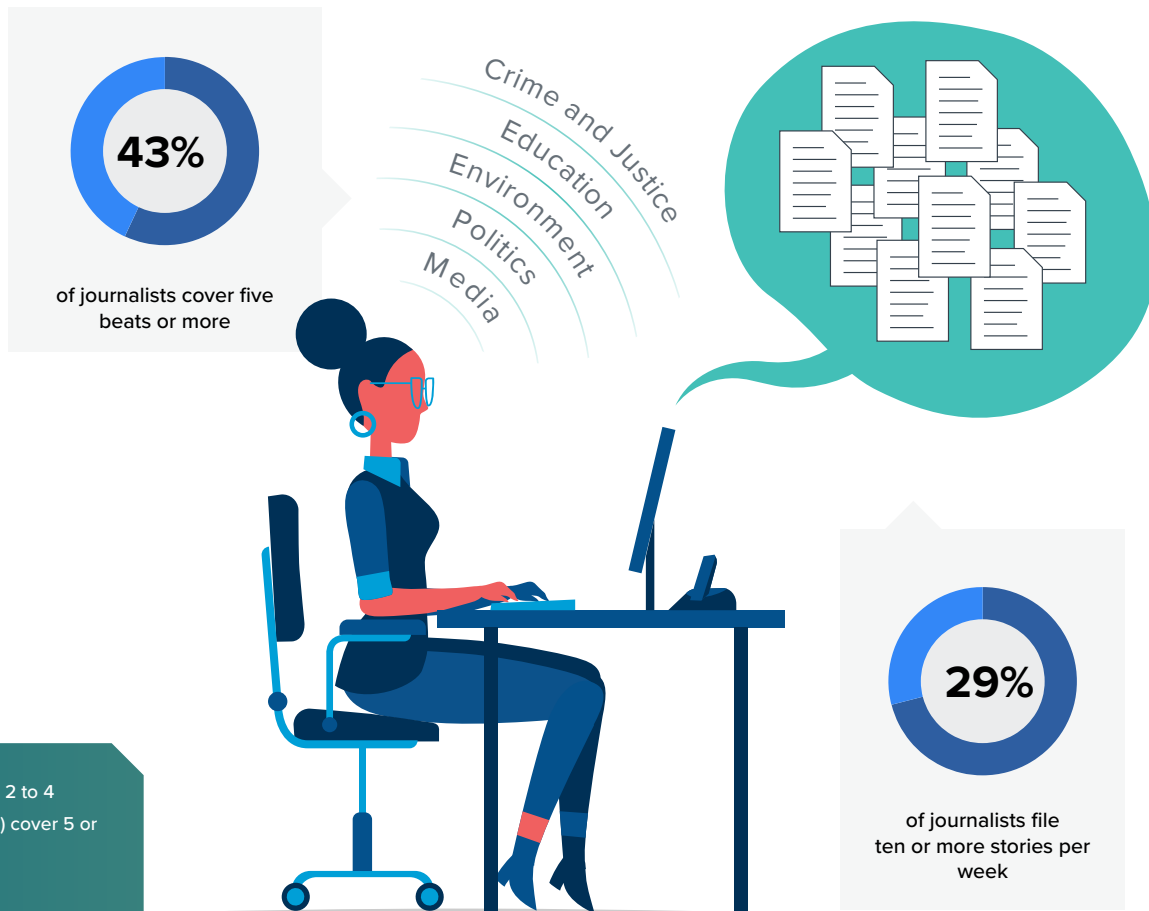
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Fewer resources, more work

“Challenges around staffing and resources” is commonly noted as one of the biggest industry challenges for journalists. In an effort to keep up with the never-ending news cycle, journalists are having to multitask on multiple levels: **Nearly three in ten journalists (29%) file 10 or more stories per week**; 36% file anywhere from 4 to 9 stories per week; 34% file between one to three stories per week.

Not only are journalists filing multiple stories, the vast majority cover multiple topics as well.

Nearly half of journalists (44%) cover 2 to 4 beats; nearly the same number (43%) cover 5 or more beats.



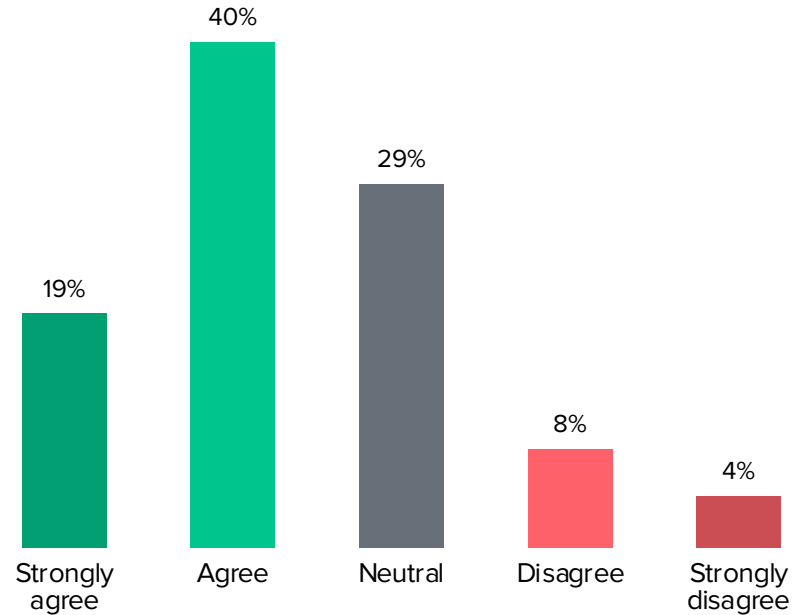
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Pressure to perform

Journalists feel the burden to drive audiences to their stories, which is increasingly directly related to budgets. **“Declining advertising and circulation revenues”** leads many newsrooms and editors to watch their audience data as closely as their ledes.

The pressure to drive clicks, shares, likes and video plays is directly impacting the industry: 59% of journalists agree that the availability of detailed audience metrics is making them rethink the way they evaluate stories. As one respondent commented, “[There is] so much content in so many places, it’s hard to stay relevant.”

The availability of detailed audience metrics* has changed the way I evaluate stories.



*views, engagement, audience data

In Their Own Words

We asked journalists to tell us the biggest stressors related to their work. Here's what some of them had to say:

“Losing trust and reader/viewership because the onslaught of content that fails to contextualize anything for readers/viewers to make sense of.”

“Decline of journalism itself in communities (e.g., closure of many newspapers).”

“Reaching sources is getting more difficult since potential sources aren't necessarily at work anymore.”

“Maintaining personal morale/energy.”

“Depending on ratings and clicks, which defines what news is reported.”

“Separating objectively honest information from sources which demonstrate substantial political bias.”

“Journalism outlets downsizing, being bought up and dismantled, or otherwise shifting priorities away from local coverage, investigative reporting, and breaking news, in favor of cheaper solutions, short-term profits, or serving existing corporate interests.”

The Media on Media: How Journalists Use Social and Multimedia

How Social Is the Media? The Intersection of Journalism and Social Media

Nearly every professional these days seems to be on social media for work—whether it's to shine a spotlight on their accomplishments, learn about new opportunities or network—and journalists are no exception. This year we asked journalists if and how they were using social media for work, and which social platforms they use most.



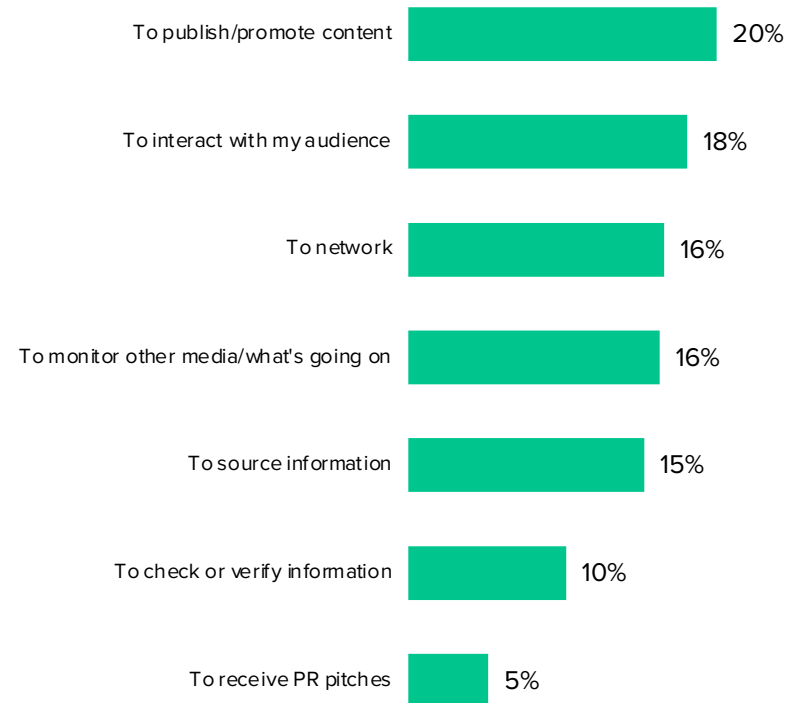
What Are Journalists Doing on Social?

When asked to rank how important social media was to various aspects of their work, 20% of journalists cited “to publish or promote content” (something most PR and comms pros can certainly identify with), making it the top answer.

PR professionals trying to pitch journalists on social media should take note: **If a journalist is using social media, it’s not likely that they are on the hunt for a PR pitch.** They are, however, using social media to network, to publish or promote content, and to source and verify information. This makes social platforms viable channels for PR pros to follow journalists, learn more about their work and potentially start a dialogue that could lead to opportunities down the line.

Perhaps even more importantly, knowing that journalists are going on to publish or promote content, social media can be a valuable resource to understand which journalists are talking about the topics that are most relevant to your client or brand.

When asked to rank how important social media was to certain work-related tasks, journalists ranked the following as "Important" or "Very Important"



The Platforms Journalists Use Most

Worldwide, Facebook is the platform journalists use most often for professional reasons (63%), such as sourcing information, interacting with their audience and publishing or promoting content, followed by Twitter (59%) and LinkedIn (56%).



Facebook
63%



Twitter
59%



LinkedIn
56%



Instagram
44%



Youtube
28%



WhatsApp
28%



TikTok
5%



Snapchat
1%

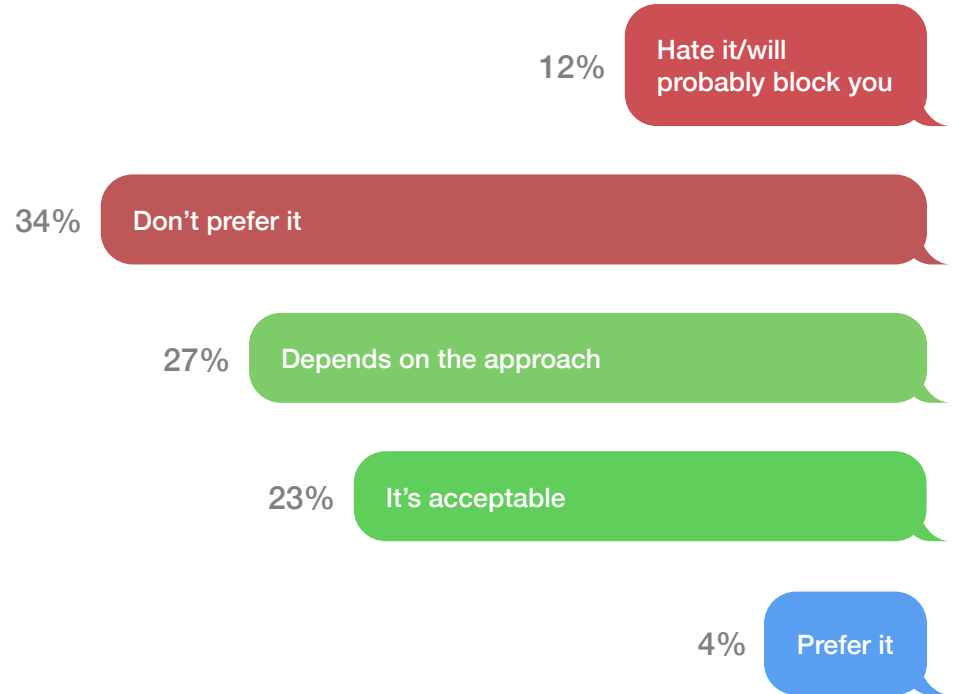
To DM or Not to DM?

When it comes to how (or if) they prefer to be contacted via social media, journalists' opinions vary widely. While nearly 1 in 4 (23%) journalists find it to be acceptable—and 4% prefer it over any other method—1 in 3 (34%) explicitly say they don't prefer it, and 12% will even go so far as to block a PR pro who tries to slide into their DMs. For more than 1 in 4 journalists (27%), what makes or breaks a successful social media connection depends on the approach.

PRO TIP Want to get a journalist's attention?

You may already be using search engines or a media database to find relevant outlets, editors and writers to connect with. But using social media to do some extra research could be the next step that differentiates you in a crowded inbox. Check out what they are sharing, commenting on and posting about, and use those insights to personalize your message. (When you show journalists you've done your research, they pay attention.)

How do you feel about PR pros reaching out to you on social media?



In Their Own Words

We followed up with journalists in our network for advice on how PR pros should reach out to them via social media.

Here's what we heard:

“If you’ve never met the journalist before or talked to them and you emailed, they ignored you, and you’re trying to get their attention on Instagram, it’s not the best approach, and the PR person will be ignored.”

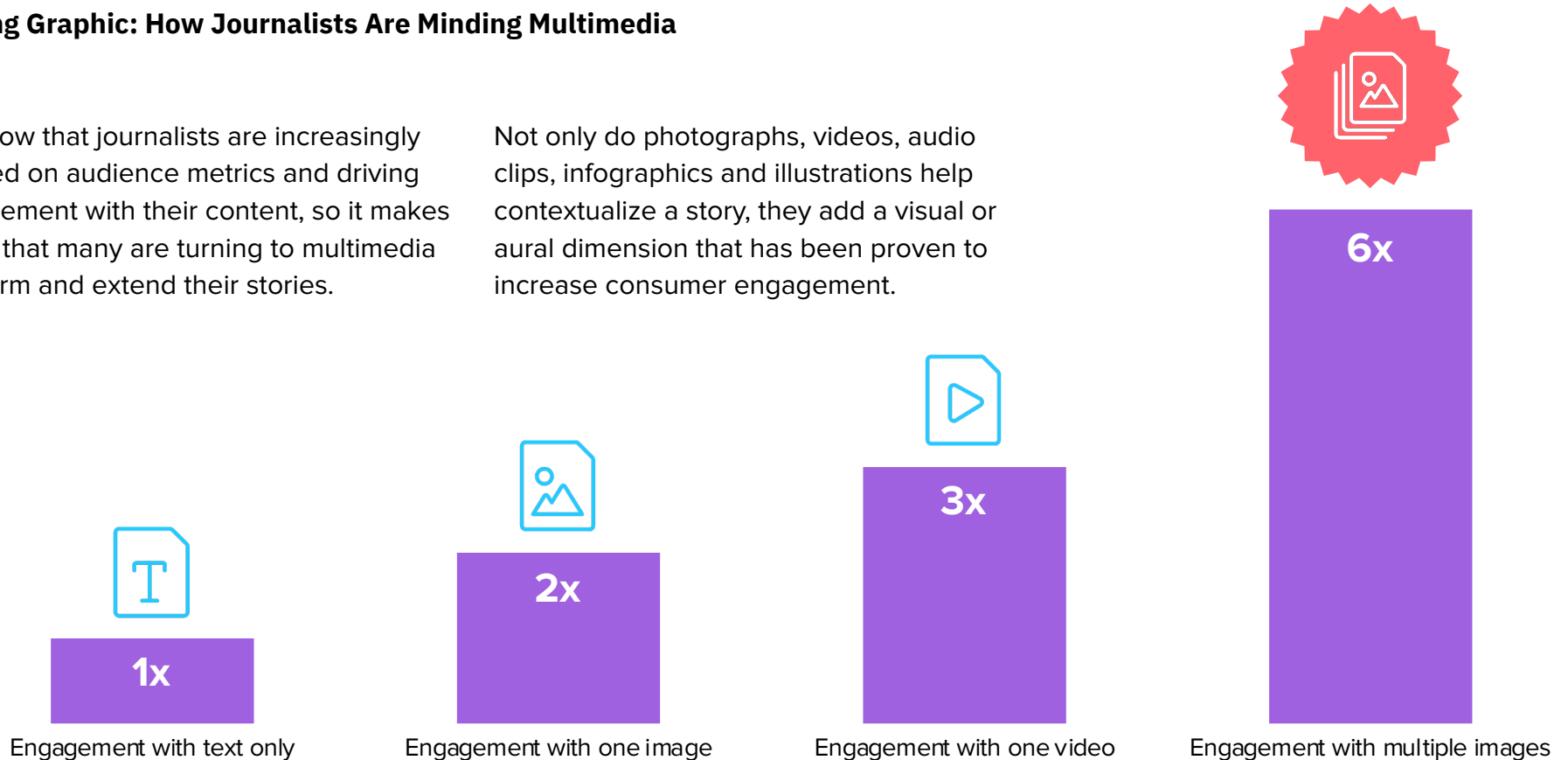
“I don’t respond to cattle calls on social media. If it’s an individual request, directed only at me, then it doesn’t matter, can be a social media message, no problem.”

“I don’t love it... I’d honestly rather get an email. I think if you have a relationship with the journalist already and aren’t cold-pitching them, and they are receptive to you following them and communicating through that social media platform, it’s fine.”

Getting Graphic: How Journalists Are Minding Multimedia

We know that journalists are increasingly focused on audience metrics and driving engagement with their content, so it makes sense that many are turning to multimedia to inform and extend their stories.

Not only do photographs, videos, audio clips, infographics and illustrations help contextualize a story, they add a visual or aural dimension that has been proven to increase consumer engagement.

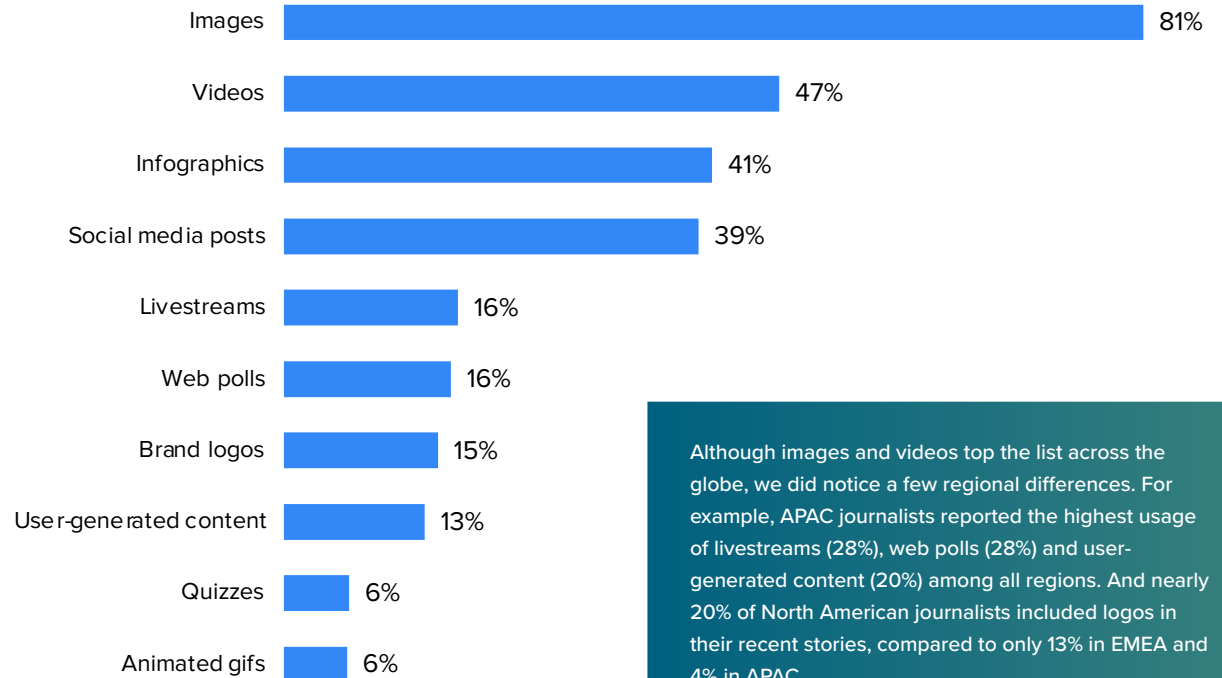


Source data from PRNewswire

What's more, 1 in 5 journalists (22%) explicitly say that publicists can do them a favor by including multimedia content in their pitches and with their press releases. More than half of journalists (54%) go so far as to say they would be more likely to cover a story if provided with multimedia.

Going by journalists' most-used multimedia elements from the last half of 2021, **images may be the fastest way to get out of journalists' inboxes and onto their editorial calendars:** Worldwide, 81% of journalists have recently used photos to accompany content. Video is also popular (47%), followed closely by infographics (41%) and social media posts (39%).

Which multimedia or data elements have you included in your articles over the past 6 months?



Although images and videos top the list across the globe, we did notice a few regional differences. For example, APAC journalists reported the highest usage of livestreams (28%), web polls (28%) and user-generated content (20%) among all regions. And nearly 20% of North American journalists included logos in their recent stories, compared to only 13% in EMEA and 4% in APAC.

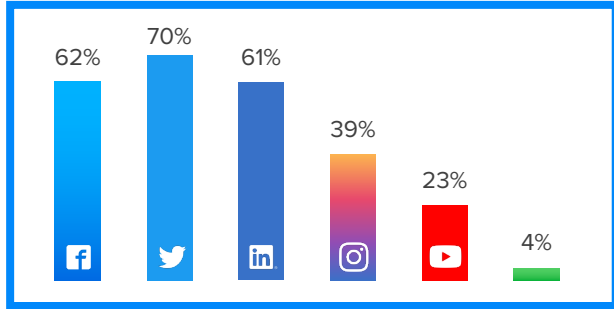
Regional Differences Across Social Media

While Facebook is the media's preferred social platform overall, a closer look at how social media is used across North America, Europe and APAC tells a slightly different story. For example, Twitter shares the top spot with Facebook in North America, and it ties with LinkedIn as the second most often used platform in European markets. Over in the APAC markets, however, Instagram is second only to Facebook, and journalists are just as likely to use WhatsApp as LinkedIn. WhatsApp is also significantly more popular with journalists in Europe and Asia than with those in North America.

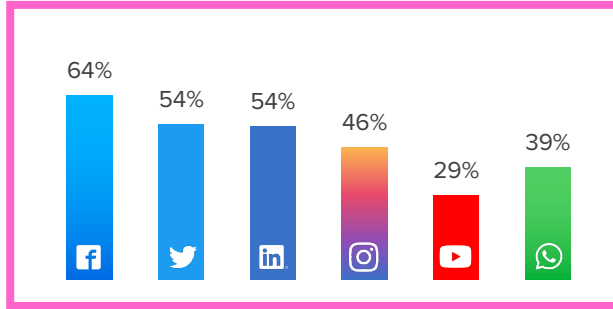
These findings underscore the importance of keeping in mind cultural and regional differences when planning a multinational communications strategy.



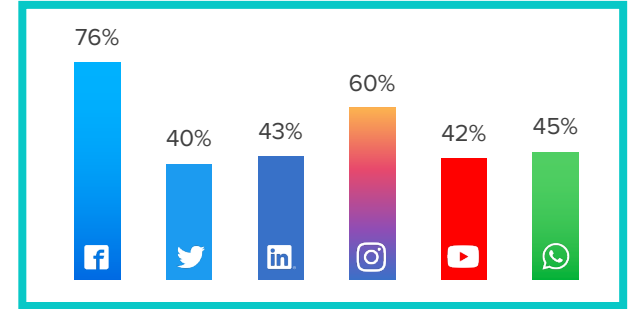
What social media platforms do you use most often for professional reasons? Check all that apply.



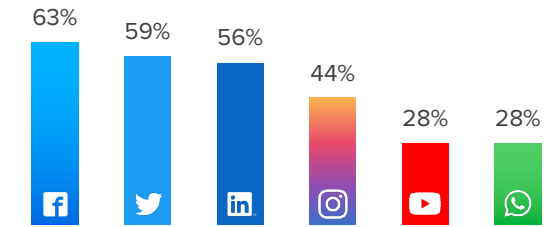
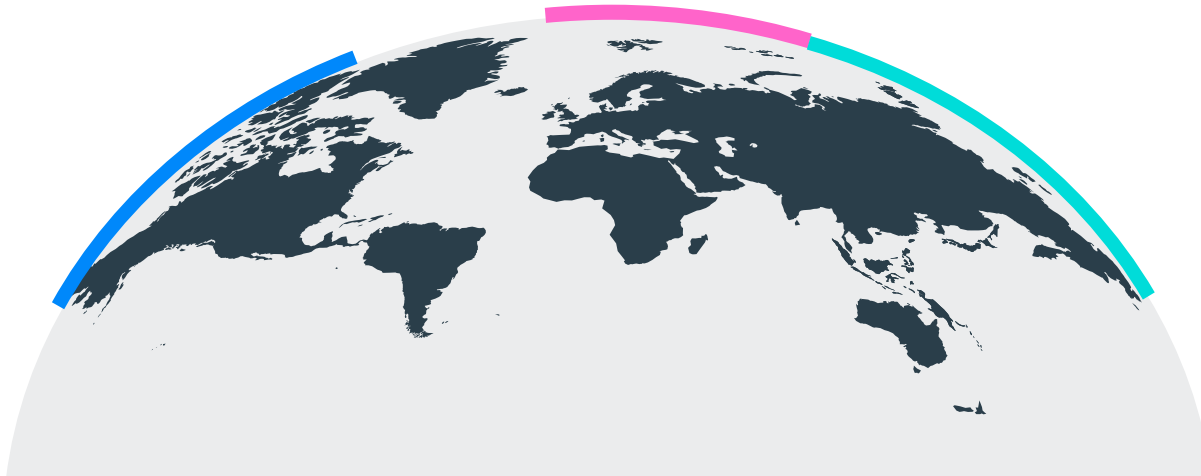
North America



Europe



APAC



Global



Multimedia Best Practices

Tips for Publicists and Brand Marketers

In addition to helping journalists with their stories, providing multimedia helps you express a narrative and visually represent your story the way you want. Without an image, video or other content to go by, media outlets may skim and move on.

Start with quality

High-resolution images are a must. Period.

Caption your content

Include captions and credits with all visuals (so journalists don't have to chase you down for details) and make sure you've secured the rights to share any assets you offer up front.

Link, don't attach

Not only do attachments eat up space, but many journalists also automatically delete emails that include attachments to protect against viruses (if those emails don't already end up in the spam folder). Do everyone a favor and include links to a landing page, press kit or a cloud storage folder where journalists can easily find and download the assets they need.

Make them easily accessible

If a journalist has to register or get special permission to view your assets, you're giving them more work to do and eating into their already limited time.

BOTTOM LINE Do your homework.

Different companies will have different guidelines around multimedia submissions.

Take the guesswork out of what you can or should include by going right to the source: Most outlets will provide guidelines on their websites (link vs. attachment, file format and size, etc.).

If available, look at the pitching profile of the journalist to whom you're reaching out—online or in a reliable media database—to learn their requirements.

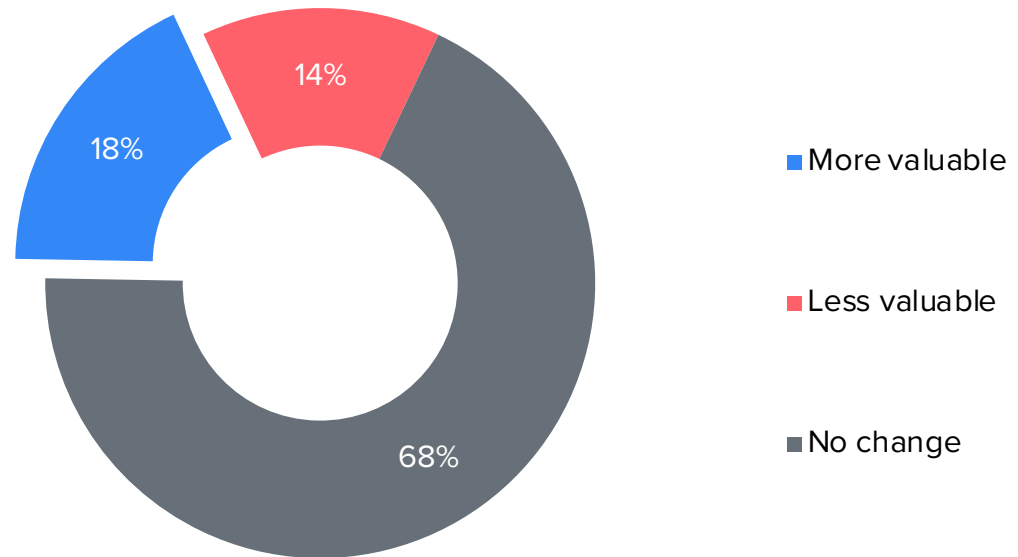
From Pitch to Partnership: How PR Pros Can Better Serve Journalists

One of the biggest challenges we hear from publicists is the struggle to create, build and maintain solid relationships with journalists. It's important to remember that journalists want and value their partnerships, too.

In fact, 18% of journalists say their relationships with PR professionals have gotten more valuable in the last year.

As journalists are contending with significant internal and external challenges in their work, the more you can do to help journalists work efficiently and effectively, the better partners they can be to you.

How has your relationship with PR professionals changed over the last year?



How to Win (Over) Journalists and Influence Earned Media

1

Make Their Lives Easier

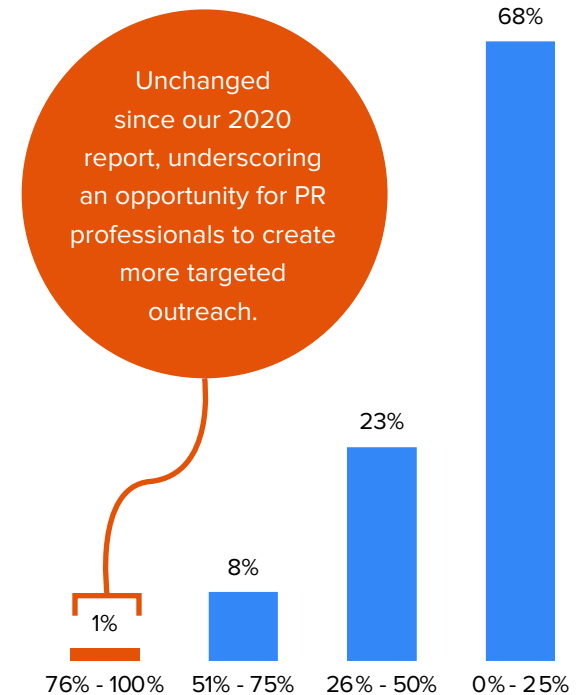
We asked journalists what PR pros could do to make their lives (and their ability to help PR pros in return) easier. These are their top suggestions.

“Understand my target audience and what they find relevant.”

This was No. 1 on the wish list, cited by 63% of journalists – not surprising, given that more than 2 in 3 journalists say the vast majority of pitches they receive are irrelevant.

Do your due diligence to ensure you’re reaching out to the right person at the right outlet. This is consistent with the many conversations we’ve had with journalists throughout the years. As one travel industry journalist put it: “Take the time to research the journalist you are pitching... **When I do get that rare pitch that shows me that the PR pro has actually viewed my work, they’ve got my attention.**”

What percentage of pitches received do you consider relevant?



“Be ready and able to respond quickly.”

More than half of journalists (57%) need PR pros to provide them with data and expert sources when they need them, and (29%) say PR pros can help them by understanding and respecting their deadlines.

Journalists are often working against tight deadlines and have to move quickly. They have little time—and less patience—for PR pros who don’t respect their need for speed. **(Note that 1 in 4 journalists will even block a publicist who fails to respond to them within the same day or a given deadline.)**

As one frustrated respondent wrote, **“Don’t offer a source for a time-sensitive piece without checking with the source.** I can’t tell you how many times someone offers a source on breaking news and then gets back to me and says that person won’t be available for another week/days after all. Very aggravating!”

“Provide me with a list of upcoming stories.”

While some journalists have to plan their stories or reports the same day, many are planning weeks or even months ahead. **Three in 10 journalists say they would benefit from having a list of upcoming stories PR pros have planned.** Not only does it give them the lead time they need to slot a potential story idea into their editorial calendar, it provides the opportunity for PR pros to learn more about the types of stories their target journalists want to cover, thus saving them time and energy later on.



“Provide short pitches with quick facts that enable me to produce short-form content quickly.”

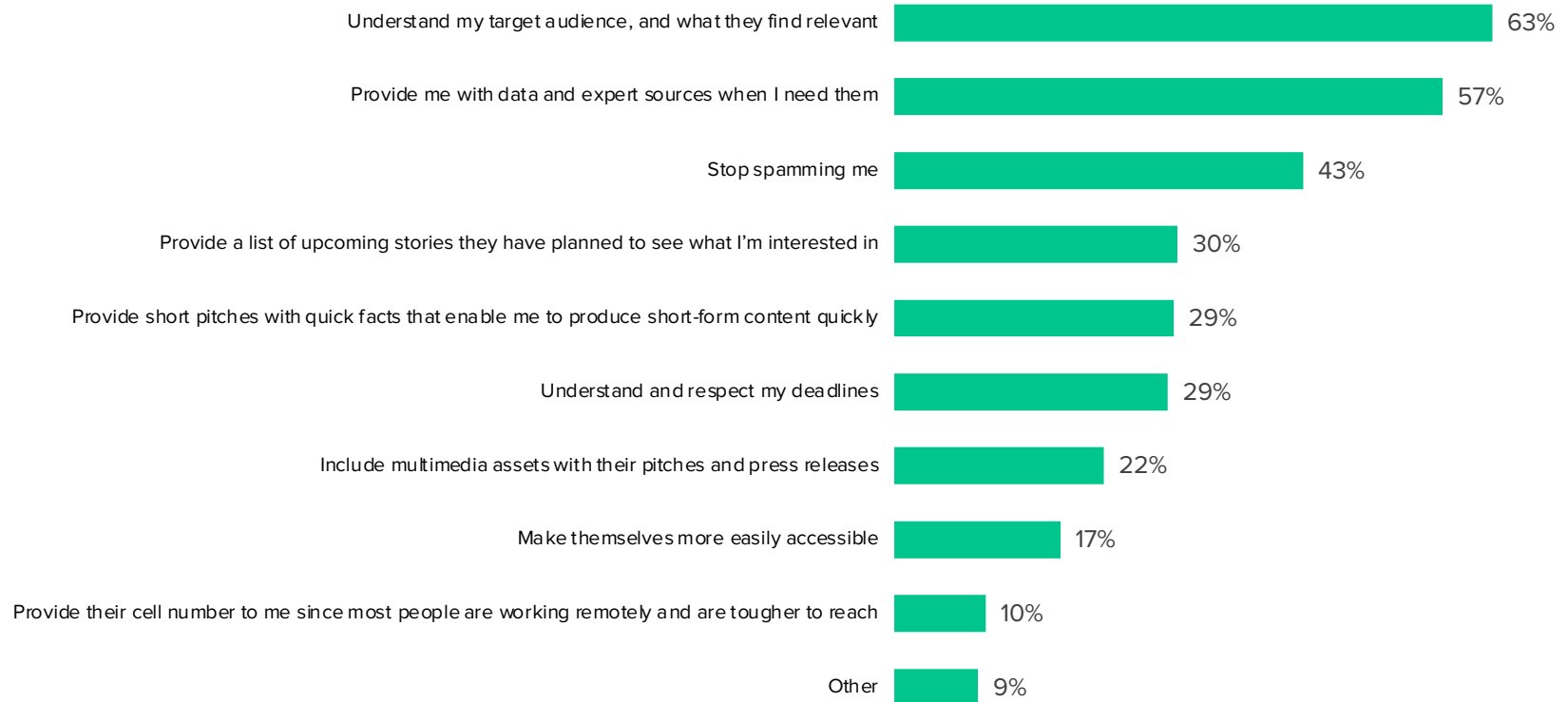
Good journalists never bury the lede, which may explain why they want pitches that do the same. By making your pitch to the point and easily digestible, an editor or writer can quickly decide if your pitch is right for their outlet and audience.

“Trust us to do our jobs.”

When asked to tell us how PR pros could make their jobs easier, **several respondents expressed frustration over feeling micromanaged by the people they’ve worked with**. One respondent described a recent encounter with “a PR gatekeeper type who actually thought it was his job to be my editor and would tell me things like how I didn’t need a sidebar. That’s not his call.” Another said: “I’m now blackballing PR people who contact me because they want a sentence rephrased to reflect corporate messaging goals, and frame this as a ‘correction.’ This is happening more often, and it absolutely is intolerable.”



What can PR professionals do to make your job easier? Check all that apply.



2

Give Them What They Want

Journalists also revealed the types of content they want most from brands and PR pros, with press releases taking the top spot, cited by more than 3 in 4 (76%) of journalists. Year after year, press releases top the list as the preferred method of delivering news to the media in a legitimate, thoughtful and urgent way.

Sixty-three percent want original research reports (such as trends and market data), and nearly half (49%) want opportunities to attend brand or company events, a signal that live events are back (49% expect to attend more in-person events as they return to calendars). Initial ideas for story development, and photo images and logos rounded out the top five answers.

What kind of content do you want to receive from brands and PR professionals? Choose all that apply.



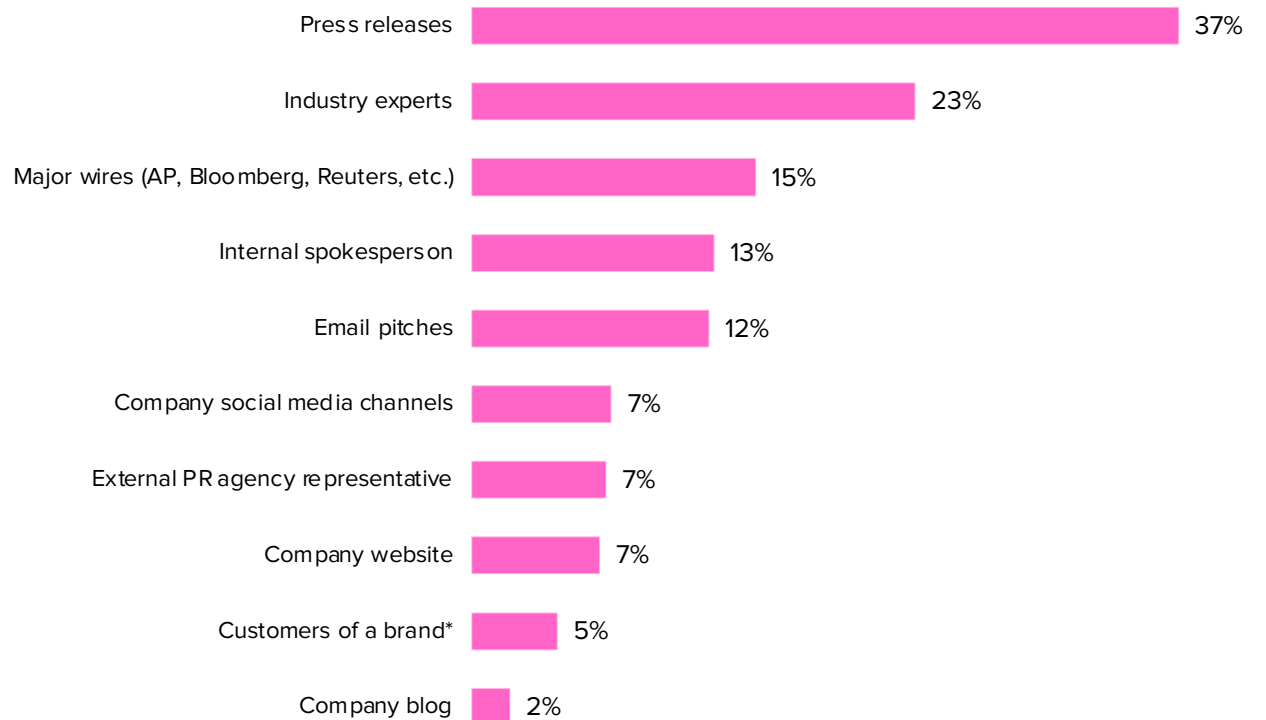
When asked about the sources they find most useful for generating stories or story ideas, press releases again came in at number one, cited by more than a third of journalists (37%). Industry experts were also high on the list (23%), followed by major wire services (15%). Internal spokespersons (13%) and email pitches (12%) rounded out the top five.

PRO TIP

Don't Underestimate the Power of a Press Release

If there's one thing journalists love, it's a good press release. Our findings show that more than 3 in 4 want to receive press releases from brands and PR pros (over any other type of content), and press releases are the #1 resource for generating story ideas.

Which source do you consider the most useful for generating stories or story ideas?



*Customers of a brand was not given as an answer choice in some Asian markets.

Respect Their Needs

Knowing what journalists want is good, but sometimes knowing what journalists don't want is even more useful. We asked journalists, "What would make you block a PR person or put them on your 'do not call' list?" Here were their top answers:

Spamming with irrelevant pitches.

The vast majority of journalists (74%) won't tolerate it, which is all the more reason to make sure you're targeting the right people for your pitches.

Providing inaccurate or unsourced information.

Given how critical credibility and audience trust is for the media, it should come as no surprise that 60% of journalists find this inexcusable.





Pitches that sound like marketing brochures.

More than half of journalists (51%) have no tolerance for pitches rife with clichés, jargon and clickbait-sounding subject lines.

Following up repeatedly.

One too many follow-ups is enough for 48% of journalists to block you permanently.

Failure to respond within deadline.

If you don't respect their time, 22% of journalists won't make time for you.

Dodging inquiries/failing to be transparent.

Forty-two percent of journalists won't stand for PR pros who aren't direct or easy to get a hold of.

Calling them by the wrong name.

For 16% of journalists, it's not just awkward; it's also unforgivable.

Inappropriate social media outreach.

While some journalists are okay with being contacted on social media, 18% are not okay with it at all.

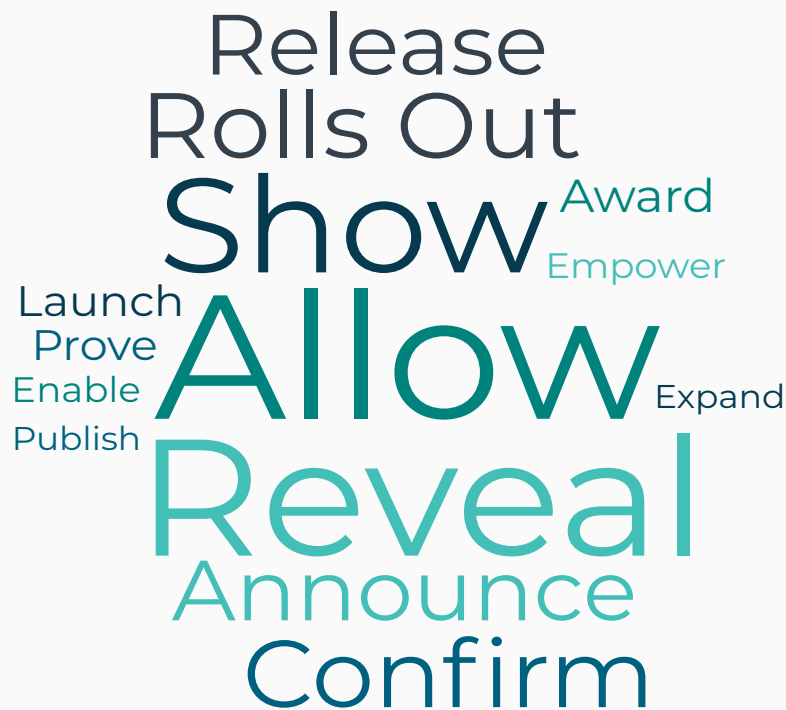
How to Craft Captivating Headlines

Don't Waste Precious Real Estate

Eight out of 10 recipients will only read your press release headline, so make it count. The best performing press release headlines hover around 88 characters. Be sure to include the most important keywords (like the company name) within the first 70 characters, where most search engines and email subject lines get cut off.

Do Move the Needle with Action Words

Press releases with headlines that include action words see the most engagement, as evidenced by years of analysis from Cision PR Newswire. To the right are the action words that consistently appear among the highest performing press releases distributed by PR Newswire.



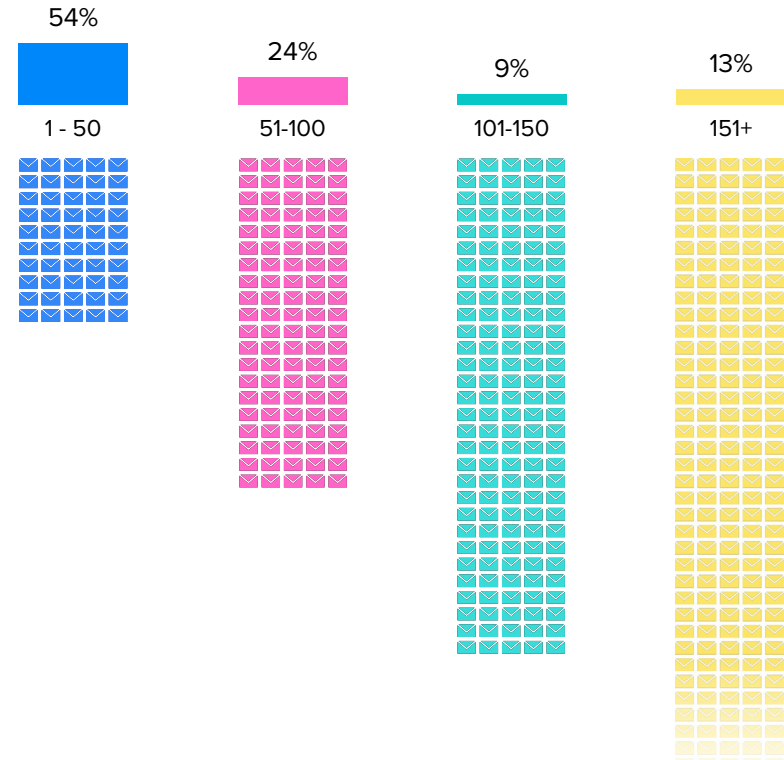
The Particulars of Pitching and Following Up

We wanted to dig deeper into how journalists feel about PR pitches in particular, given the sheer volume of communications writers and editors receive: Nearly half of journalists (46%) receive more than 50 pitches per week—and they're not just email. Phone calls and social media messages are also part of the deluge. More than 1 in 5 (22%) get more than 100 pitches per week.

Unfortunately, a healthy portion of those emails go directly to the trash folder: **The vast majority of journalists (91%) say only about half the pitches they receive are relevant to their audience or sector.**

This further underscores the need for PR pros to do the necessary legwork up front to ensure their pitches are reaching the right audiences.

How many pitches do you get a week (including emails, phone calls, social media messages)?



Before You Pitch: A To-Do List for Earning Your Media Coverage

A little research on journalists *before* you reach out to them can save everyone a lot of time in the long term.

Google them

Most journalists have profiles online or in reputable media databases, which often include info on the outlets they work for, topics they cover, their social media handles and how they prefer to be pitched.



Know their work

Take time to review their past stories. This will be the single best indicator of the types of stories they are likely to cover and the audiences for which they create content.



Look at their editorial calendars

See if and how your pitch fits into what they're already planning to cover.



Check out their feeds

Take a peek at their social media activity to see what they're posting, sharing, liking and commenting on. This can tell you even more about the topics they're most interested in and most likely to cover.



Location, location, location

Pay attention to where the journalist is located and which regions they cover. Pitching a journalist located in Kansas City for an event that takes place in Miami won't win you any coverage (but it may earn you a place in their spam folder).



Continued from page 29; *The Particulars of Pitching and Following Up.*

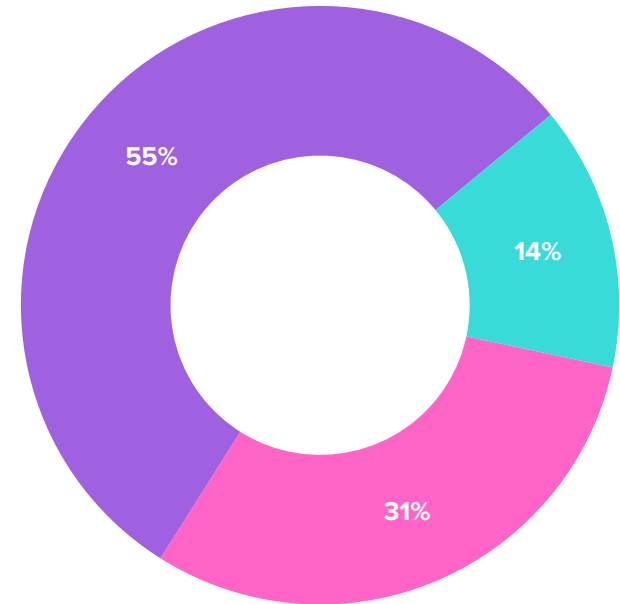
If there's anything trickier than getting a pitch right, however, it's deciding on the right follow-up approach. The good news is that the majority of journalists are receptive to hearing from you after an initial pitch has been sent—but only up to a point.

More than half of journalists (55%) say one follow-up is enough, and 14% say twice is okay; however, nearly a third of journalists (31%) say “thanks, but no thanks” to following up altogether.

PRO TIP Read the Room

If you've followed up and haven't received a response, there's a good chance the journalist either didn't find your pitch relevant or couldn't work it into their schedule. Either way, it's likely time to move on, because persistence doesn't always pay off with journalists: Nearly 1 in 2 (48%) will block those who follow up repeatedly. Use your time and energy to find another contact who may be more receptive to your message.

How many times should a PR professional follow up with you after sending a pitch?



■ Never ■ Not more than once ■ Not more than twice

In Their Own Words

Over the years, we've spoken with tens of thousands of journalists on how they prefer to be pitched. Here's what they had to say:



1

Make it personal: Show that you've done your homework.

“Collaborations are always most effective when PR professionals understand our format, editorial content style and audience prior to pitching.”

“It is so important to personalize your messaging. I like to see that the publicists pay attention to who I interview [and what I] feature, rather than copying and pasting a press release.”

“Take the time to research the journalist you are pitching. Every day I get dozens of PR pitches... When I get that rare pitch that shows me that the PR pro has actually viewed my work, they've got my attention.”



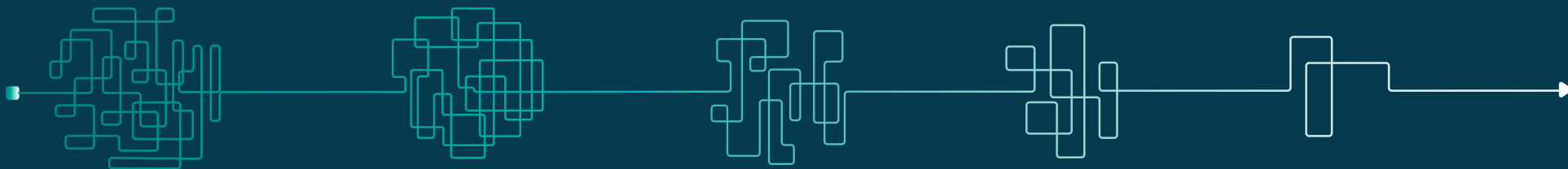
2

Keep it short and simple: Get to your point—and fast.

“I get hundreds of pitches per day, and it’s impossible to read every single one completely, so the first two lines are important.”

“Please be clear and concise about what you are pitching in the beginning of your email; we often receive emails that take a couple of paragraphs to introduce their item.”

“I won’t read a pitch if it’s too long. Just get the main idea out and let me know I can reach out to you if I have any questions.”



3

Be direct: Lose the gimmicks and faux familiarity.

“When [the pitch] feels more like a pyramid-scheme sales pitch, it’s a huge turnoff for me.”

“Don’t use [a] clickbait title. Just tell me why you’re writing. ‘The best fashions ever’ won’t tell me anything; however, ‘sundresses from [our client] for summer’ will.”

“Make the first pitch simple and to the point... Make sure the subject line says what you’re pitching—not ‘quick question’ or another clickbait title.”





How to Pitch a Product: What to Include

We asked journalists about the must-have elements for PR pros to include in their product pitches:



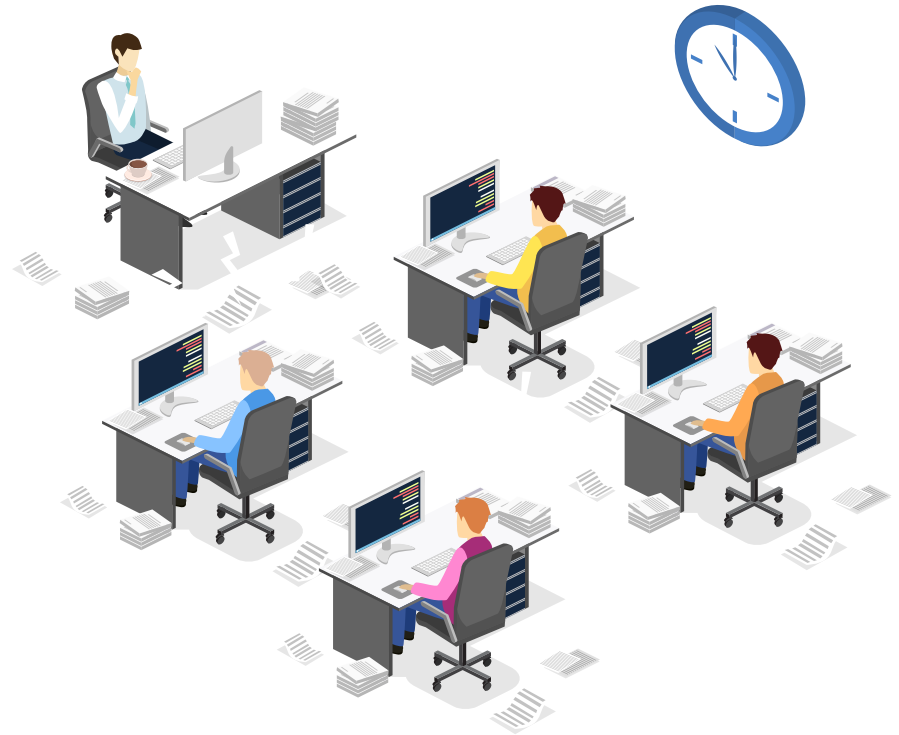
Final Thoughts and Key Takeaways

In this report, we looked at the challenges journalists face, the frustrations they deal with and the ways in which they work. They value their relationships with PR professionals, but there is a need and an opportunity for PR professionals to provide even more value.

As the business of communications is a two-way street, with publicists and journalists relying on each other, some themes and variations resonated powerfully from the results of Cision's 2022 State of the Media survey, from which this report was developed.

Journalists are overworked and under-resourced.

Most journalists are covering multiple beats and filing multiple stories per week, all while being inundated with (often inapt) requests for coverage. Showing a little patience and a lot of consideration can go a long way toward building trust and better relationships (and better coverage). Respect their deadlines, understand what their audiences find relevant, and provide the information and assets they need up front.



The art and science of social media outreach.

Social media provides additional avenues to connect with journalists, but the same rules of “traditional” outreach apply—journalists have their own specific preferences for how they want to be approached, and they can smell a generic, copy-and-paste message a mile away.

A picture is worth more than a thousand words

Journalists are using images, videos, infographics and other multimedia assets more than ever. Much of the time, the onus is on them to track those elements down. The more that you provide relevant and appropriate content up front—with captions and credits—the easier you make it for them to cover your story, and the more likely they will want to work with you in the future.

Long live the press release

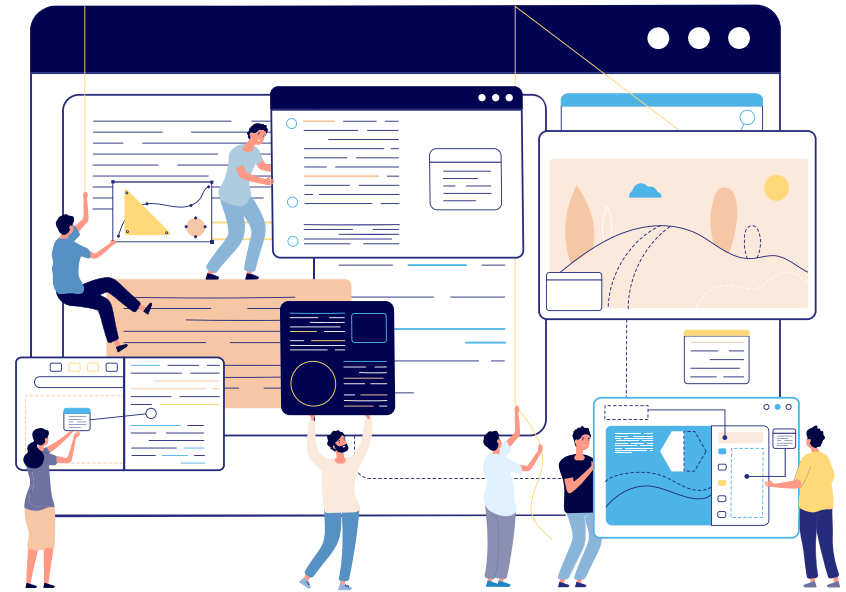
For all the changes the media has seen in recent years, one thing remains the same: Press releases are still one of the most powerful vehicles for getting your news, story, product or event in front of the right journalists and helping those journalists generate stories.



Personalization is powerful

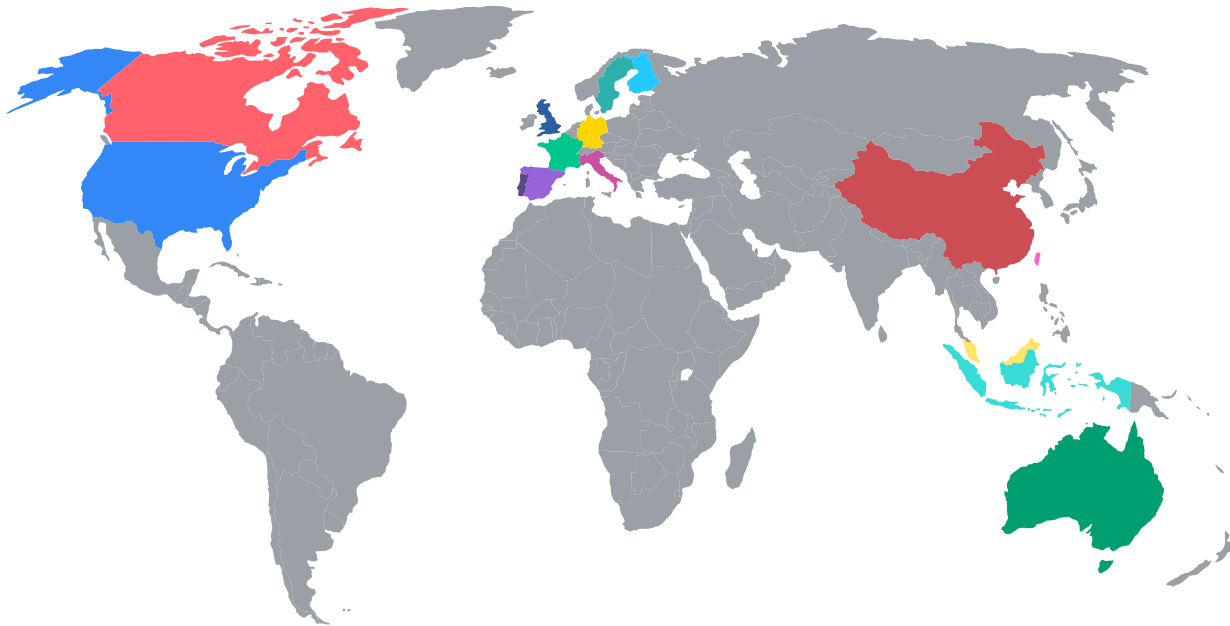
Journalists are begging for more personalized outreach. Yes, journalists are open to connecting on social media, but the approach has to be right. Multimedia is great, but only if the provided assets make sense for their medium, and even the most well-crafted press releases don't hold any weight if the content isn't relevant.

For public relations and communications professionals who want to make the biggest impact, building relationships with the media is essential. Doing the legwork up front to understand your audience of journalists (and the audiences they serve) will make the single biggest difference in your ability to capture their attention and lay the foundation for a long-term, mutually beneficial partnership down the line.



Methodology

Cision conducted its 2022 State of the Media survey throughout January and February 2022. Surveys were emailed to Cision Media Database members, who are vetted by the company's media research team to verify their positions as media professionals, influencers and bloggers.



We also surveyed members of our HARO (Help a Reporter Out) database, and made the survey available to media professionals in the PR Newswire for Journalists database.

This year's survey collected responses from 3,890 respondents in 17 markets across the globe: U.S., Canada, UK, France, Germany, Finland, Sweden, Italy, Spain, Portugal, China, Australia, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Taiwan and Hong Kong.

The survey language was translated and localized for each market and then the results were tallied together to form this global report.



Cision is a comprehensive communications platform enabling more than 100,000 public relations and marketing professionals around the world to understand, influence and amplify their stories.

As the market leader, Cision enables the next generation of communication professionals to strategically operate in the modern media landscape where company success is directly impacted by public opinion.

Cision has offices in 24 countries through the Americas, EMEA and APAC, and offers a suite of best-in-class solutions, including [PR Newswire](#), [MultiVu](#), [Brandwatch](#), [Cision Communications Cloud®](#) and [Cision Insights](#).

To learn more, visit www.cision.nl and follow Cision on [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#) or [Twitter](#).



Thank you for reading the 2022 State of the Media Report

Next steps & recommendations:



Get your press release in front of the right audiences with the most trusted distribution network, Cision PR Newswire.



See the impact of your efforts and understand where to focus next with Cision's Media Monitoring & Analytics solutions.



Connect & build relationships with the right journalists. Cision Connect is more than a media database, it's a comprehensive relationship management solution.



Streamline your entire PR strategy with our all-in-one, award-winning platform that covers the entire PR lifecycle: the next-gen Cision Comms Cloud.

Want to find out how Cision can help you? Schedule a demo with one of our experts.