



2022 PR Media Report

A Second Look at Journalists' Shifting Attitudes Toward Public Relations and the Challenges of an Industry in Transition

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GLOBAL RESULTS
COMMUNICATIONS

Last year, **Global Results Communications (GRC)** released its first report revealing journalists' attitudes toward public relations and the challenges of an industry in transition. Our second annual report continues where we left off, with 1,015 members of the media responding to important survey questions covering the same range of relevant industry topics, including what they want most from PR professionals. This second pass gives us the opportunity to measure just how far the needle has moved one way or the other, or whether it has remained in the same place. For example, when respondents were asked if their reliance on content from PR had changed from 2021, the needle had not moved at all; 75% said their reliance was the same, 15% said it was less, and 10% said it was more. The main reason given for relying on PR for content also stayed the same — ***it saves them time.***

On the other hand, it's evident that **the pressures of an industry increasingly morphing to digital are intensifying.**



KEY TAKEAWAYS

1 Changing Demographics

The most notable changes from 2021 to 2022 relate to demographic information of the respondents, including their type of outlet and industry focus. Print is on the decline, with broadcast and digital on the rise. Industry focus is incrementally shifting toward tech, healthcare and international news, with a decline in local and regional news.

2021 Platform	2022	2021 Outlet Type	2022	2021 Industry Focus	2022
Broadcast - 7%	11%	International - 16%	20%	Technology - 14%	25%
Digital - 51%	57%	National - 22%	20%	Healthcare - 7%	11%
Print - 41%	31%	Local and regional - 39%	32%	Hospitality/Entmt - 14%	11%

Similar to last year, the majority of respondents (58%) possess more than 20 years of experience and have been witness to massive industry upheaval. While some of that 58% may date back much further, it's of significance that 85% of respondents have been in the business at least ten years, a time period over which more industry-impacting consolidation and change has occurred:

2013 - Tribune Co. spins off into Tribune Media and Tribune Publishing

2015 - Verizon purchases AOL

2021 - Tribune Publishing sells to New York hedge fund Alden Global Capital

2022 - AT&T spins off its WarnerMedia business to merge its media properties with Discovery

2 PR is still too promotion heavy and news light

When journalists dismiss information received from PR professionals, more than half (58%) say it's due to misalignment with the target audience of the publication/outlet, or its heavy leaning on the promotional side (32%). Of course, it's our job to promote our clients' products and services, but what we promote must be newsworthy. If we spend hours developing a pitch or press release that gets tossed in the delete bin, we're leaving money on the table for our clients and doing a disservice to our reputation. It's that simple. No wonder more than half the respondents say that PR professionals don't respect or understand what they need.

3 Less travel is required for face-to-face interviews

We are likely to agree that video conferencing helped bridge the remote gap early in 2020 when employees and employers dispersed. Since then, use of video conferencing has dramatically increased in every industry. The option to join by video or just voice allows for more people to be in the "meeting" without the need to travel to a particular location. It's a time and cost saver, for sure. Even journalists, who traditionally have preferred phone calls and email for interacting with sources, are slowly getting on board with video. Almost half the respondents (47%) still favor phone calls, with 33% preferring interaction through email. But 20% now prefer video, a significant jump from last year at 11%. Seeing someone's face and hearing their voice at the same time can help build stronger relationships. For journalists, this can be helpful in establishing a rapport and building credibility with their sources.



JOURNALISTS FACE MORE CHALLENGES THAN EVER, WITH ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES CHANGING

Biggest Challenge:

27% Battle for reader attention

14% Quality of news less appreciated

12% Increased competition from bloggers,
podcasters and citizen journalist

12% Waning reader trust

11% Fake news phenomenon

9% Rising journalists are unprepared

8% Other

7% Less objectivity

The most positive change in the last two years:

42% More channels for news distribution
(Down 6%) to reach audiences

16% Other

12% More recognition for good writing and reporting
(Down 5%)

12% Outlets more diligent about fact checking

10% More journalists are dedicated to quality

8% More journalists work harder for the facts



78% OF JOURNALISTS SURVEYED SAY THEY RELY ON INFORMATION FROM PUBLIC RELATIONS PROFESSIONALS FOR NEWS...

How often do you use content from PR professionals?

Very Often **15%**
Often **27%**
Sometimes **41%**
Rarely **18%**

Helpfulness of content:

Very Helpful **12%**
Helpful **31%**
Somewhat Helpful **46%**
Not Helpful **11%**

2021 vs 2022 | Journalists' reliance on content from PR

More **10%**
Same **75%**
Less **15%**

Reason they use content from PR - Same:
Not Enough Time

Half of the respondents (50%) view inbound content from PR professionals as important to their work, while 8% (down 20%) say it is a vital resource, and 12% feel it is not important at all...

Vital **8%**
Very Important **25%**
Important **25%**
Somewhat Important **31%**
Not Important At All **12%**

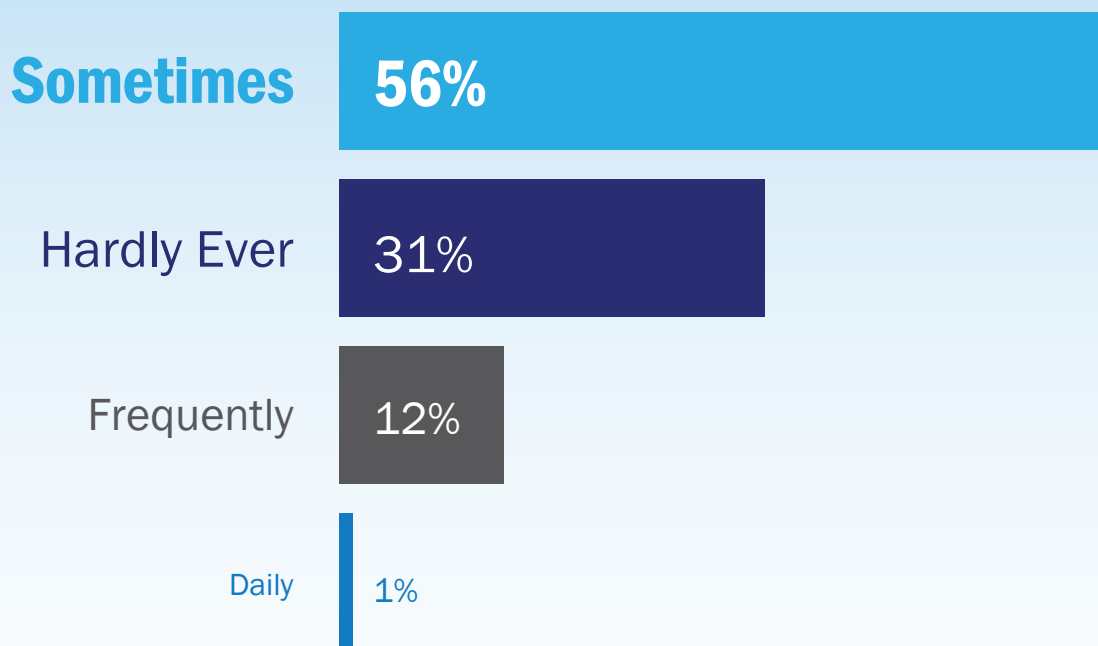
Content journalists are most likely to use:

Media Release/Alert **59%**
Pitch/Article Abstract **13%**
Press Kit **9%**
Contributed Article/SME **6%**
Case Study **5%**
Some or All The Above **8%**



But quality and accuracy need improving.

How often are you provided with inaccurate information from PR professionals?



TOP REASONS JOURNALISTS DISMISS CONTENT PROVIDED BY PR PROFESSIONALS:

Does not align with publication or outlet **58%**
Content is too promotional **32%**
Other **10%**

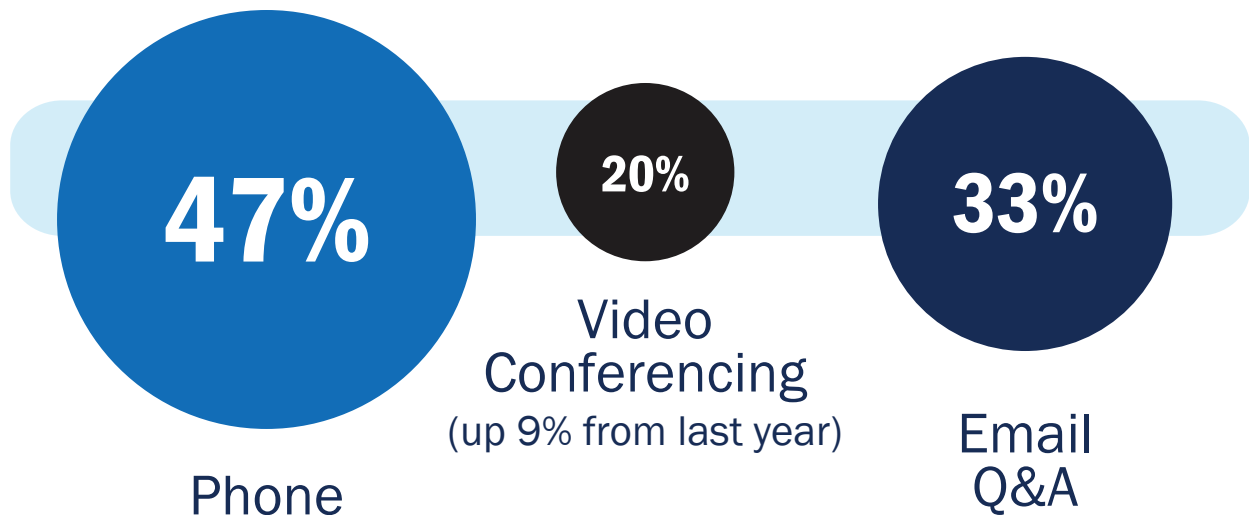


HOW OFTEN DO YOU RECEIVE CONTENT?



WHEN IT COMES TO INTERVIEWING SOURCES, JOURNALIST ARE INCREASINGLY USING VIDEO:

Preference for interacting:



WHAT JOURNALISTS APPRECIATE MOST FROM PR PROFESSIONALS IS ALSO WHAT NEEDS IMPROVING

What one core characteristic of a PR professional do you appreciate most?

Respect and understanding for what journalists want and need **44%**

Responsiveness 32%

Consistency in content quality and subject matter resources 21%

Great storytelling 2%

Persuasiveness 1%

Which needs improvement?

Respect and understanding for what journalists want and need **52%**

Responsiveness 25%

Consistency in content quality and subject matter resources 11%

Great storytelling 11%

Persuasiveness 1%

While the media landscape has dramatically changed over the years, most journalists - 89% - say their opinion of the PR profession has not.

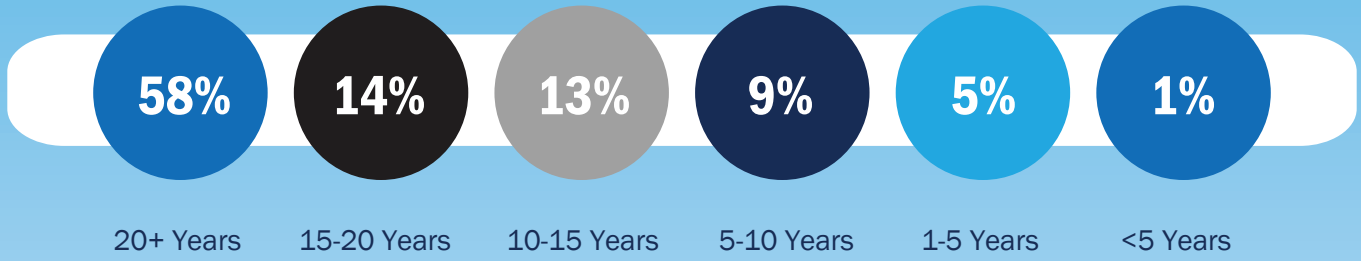
What does that mean for us?

WE MUST DO BETTER.

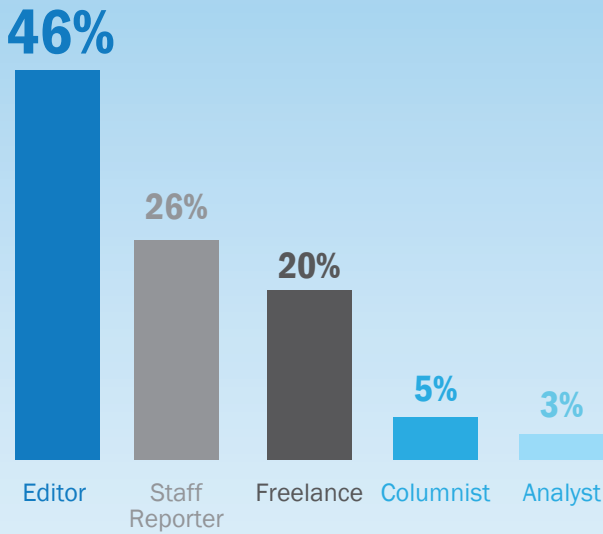


DEMOGRAPHICS AT A GLANCE

Experience



Title



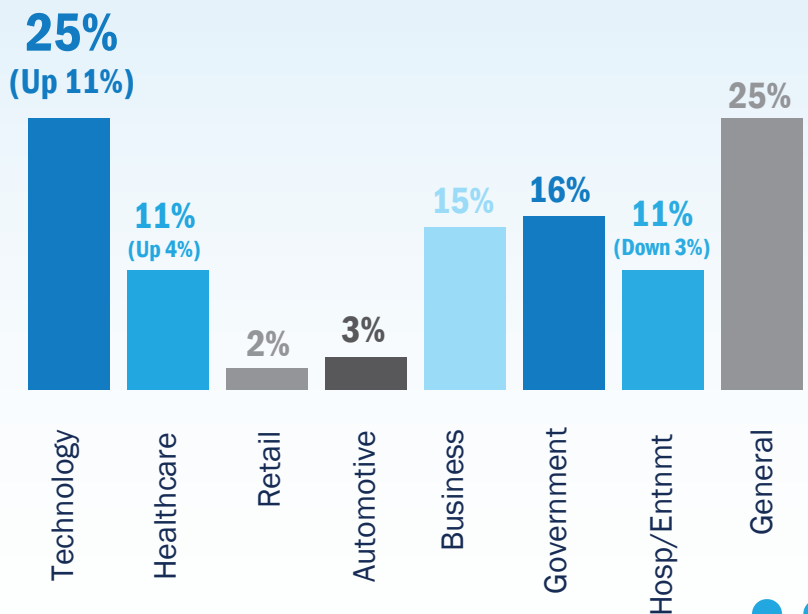
Platform



Outlet Type

International **20%** (Up 4%)
 National **20%** (Down 2%)
 Local & Regional **32%** (Down 7%)
 Industry Specific/Trade **18%**
 Lifestyle **6%**
 Other **4%**

Industry Focus



OUR TAKE...

The survey results this year compared to 2021 clearly show a continued trend. In addition to the ongoing and intense battle for reader attention, our media partners face the challenges of an evolving industry in which trust is at an all-time low and the media monopoly at an all-time high. Consider the fact that there were roughly 50 media corporations dominating the industry in the early 1980s. Today there are just five corporations that own approximately 90% of the news and entertainment media inclusive of TV, radio, cable, digital and print newspapers and magazines, books and films.

While these media giants have more communicating power than ever, journalists struggle to churn out news at a faster pace but with less support and credibility.

We know the field of traditional journalism continues to undergo a massive transition. Key findings from the 2022 American Journalist Study tell us that 6 out of 10 journalists think their industry is headed in the wrong direction. Newsrooms and audiences are shrinking, while new online niche media explodes and attracts a growing number of young and educated readers and viewers—making the notion of reaching a wide audience less plausible.

Does any of this reflect back to public relations professionals' role in the media ecosystem, or are journalists affected most by factors within the industry itself? If the latter is the case, how can we help rather than hinder?

Journalists continue to express interest in working with PR professionals, but more than half say that PR professionals don't respect or understand what they need. This is a significant and consistent, clear message to us. The field of public relations is expanding, with many firms providing branding, creative and marketing in the "paid, earned and owned" model.

For some, media relations is a shrinking part of the business.

But that doesn't excuse the fact that we're putting too little effort into understanding what our media partners need. Let's put it another way. The first rule of thumb for sales and marketing is to "know your audience." How many of us get emails that don't remotely relate to our roles within the agency? A social media specialist receiving an email that's meant for a human resources director is a prime example.

Research is foundational to everything we do, and when we get it right, we shine both in the eyes of our clients and media professionals. How well-informed are our own people—from the interns to senior staff—regarding the journalists and influencers we are trying to reach, as well as our clients' products and services?

JOURNALISTS TAKE PRIDE IN THEIR RESEARCH AND REPORTING CAPABILITIES. WE NEED TO DO THE SAME.





We welcome your comments.

In next year's survey, we'll take a more Q&A approach that will include interviews from all sides: clients, journalists and members of public relations agencies. It's our hope that in doing so, we contribute to the education of this ecosystem, making it more beneficial and rewarding for everyone.



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