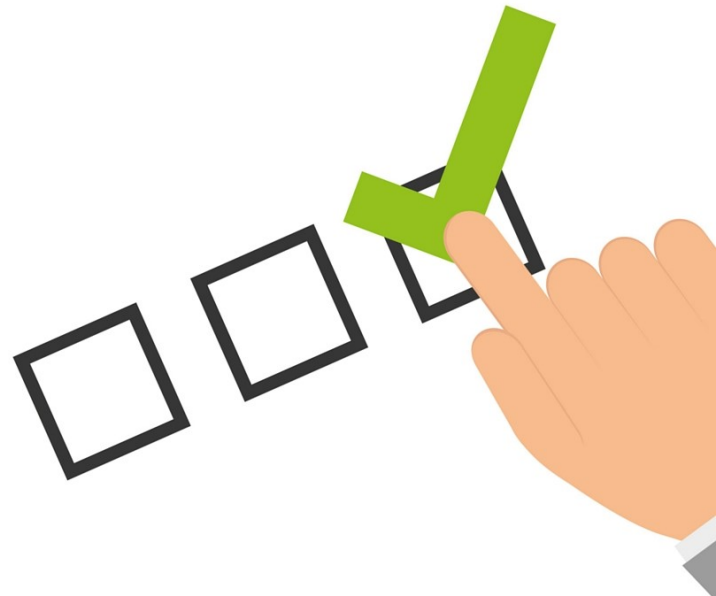


STATE OF THE MEDIA

250+ Journalists Tell Us How They Work

Wasabi Publicity and Dr. Jeanne Hurlbert of Hurlbert Consulting recently partnered to create a media survey with the goal of better understanding what journalists are looking for when it comes to picking and choosing who and what to cover. Traditional assumptions touted by many PR firms—such as the importance of having a book or the reliance on press releases—were put to the test with actual feedback from media members, with some surprising results.

The survey began by asking journalists how much email they receive in a day. While the majority were in the range of under 100 (47.5%) or under 200 (35.7%), a solid 13.7 percent of respondents reported that they receive between 250 and 499 work-related emails each day. With so much coming through their inboxes, how then do members of the media determine which leads to follow?



When “Old School” Is the Way to Go

Wasabi Chief Creative Officer and Publicist Michelle Tennant often shares with clients, “I’ve seen PR go from typewriters to Twitter.” The essence of that statement is certainly to say that things have changed as we have moved into the digital age. That said though, Wasabi keeps a finger on the pulse of connecting in real time with real people. According to our recent survey, that can really give clients a leg up when it comes to actually reaching members of the media.

A whopping 28.6% of respondents reported that they do not receive any phone call pitches on an average day, while 58% said that they receive between one and four.

As you can see by comparing the statistics of the rate of daily emails journalists receive, the difference is staggering. What this translates to in the realm of client results is that a personal touch such as a phone call pitch can put clients front and center for the media.

Where They Look: How Media Find Sources

When it comes to how journalists discover sources, social media and press releases were notably lower on their lists. Google came in as the top-ranking discovery choice at 20%, confirming once and for all that yes, Google searches are considered by the media as a valid way to research and attain information. A close second, pitches from sources came in at 18%, a highlight worth noting for PR teams that practice effective pitching strategies. Breaking news was third on the list, followed by social media and finally press releases, which only 10.6% of respondents reported as a typical sourcing tool.

SURVEY NEWS

1. Google
2. Pitches
3. Breaking news
4. Social media
5. Press releases

Source Evaluation: How Media Pick and Choose



Once sources have been identified, the next step is to evaluate which sources are best for coverage. According to the survey respondents, an impressive 77% of them specifically look for a source to be a recognized expert in their field. Traditional thought was that having written a book is a major determining factor here, but the journalists who responded to the survey reported that only 8.6% of them look for book authorship when evaluating a source.

Original research, coming in at 49.4%, came second after the source being a recognized expert, and 34.5% of respondents said they look for sources to have well-developed media materials such as an online press kit, of which 14.5% specifically sought out. In other words, approximately one in seven media members look for a source to have a press kit, meaning that its importance in the overall development of media materials should not be understated.

Drawing Some Conclusions...

While the survey has some potential weaknesses—such as the fact that more than two thirds of the respondents were female, and that 50% were between the ages of 45 and 64, notably missing a large representation by millennials—it is certainly an interesting peek under the hood of what goes into finding and vetting sources for media coverage. The value of personal connection when it comes to pitching stands out as a marked result, as does the need to be viewed as a recognized expert in terms of source credibility.



Wasabi's network of media relationships allows for strong engagement on behalf of clients who are seeking a more personal touch for their campaign. Additionally, the press kit format that we use has been praised by media not only for its professional appearance and easy navigation, but also for the accessibility of content, story ideas, photography and more—a real boon given the survey's results regarding the need for well-developed media materials.

Social media ranked as slightly important overall, and certainly contributed to the overall picture of what media members are examining, but it will come as a surprise to many that neither social media nor book authorship are as prioritized as traditional PR. Press releases as well showed as markedly lower than many would expect. All in all, for those seeking results-driven engagement with the media, the survey provides an excellent starting point for considering best processes moving forward.

To ensure your marketing plan is aligned with current media trends, please contact us for a complimentary 30-minute coaching call.



We hope sharing the results of our media survey has made a difference for you.

About Us...

Wasabi Publicity: Wasabi is a PR firm that is out to change the world. We only take on clients who make a difference because we believe the fastest way to change the world is by changing what people are talking about. Lauded by *Harvard Business Review*, *PR Week*, *NPR*, *Good Morning America*, and *CBS News*, Wasabi has represented many notable industry leaders since 2002. Some include *Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day Foundation*, *Landmark*, *Grameen Foundation*, *Dr. Bradley Nelson* and *Boeing*. When the media talks, the world listens; and Wasabi wants people to hear what really matters.



Dr. Jeanne Hurlbert: Dr. Hurlbert is an expert in survey research and social networks. She earned her BA from the College of William and Mary and her MA and PhD at the University of North Carolina. She served on the faculty of Louisiana State University for more than 25 years, teaching social science and marketing students how to read people's minds with surveys. Dr. Hurlbert now helps companies meld research and marketing, bringing "big data" strategies to businesses of all sizes.