

**PR
PERCEPTIONS**

AND

**MEDIA
REALITIES**

2015

A THREE-YEAR COMPARATIVE STUDY BY WIECK



In today's ever-changing media landscape, the past five years have brought far greater changes than even the arrival of television in 1956. The meaning of "media" has been redefined, and many traditional PR tools have become redundant.

Australian newsrooms have shed more than 2500 people in the past three years, and those who remain have diversified immensely. Print journalists have become multi-media content creators with video blogs and podcasts, while TV and radio reporters now write for websites – and then there are the "new media" who stretch the boundaries beyond recognition.

Conversely, the dramatic growth in PR activity makes it intensely challenging for PR professionals to cut through the noise.

Wieck's third survey of media and PR perceptions reveals a compelling dichotomy for PR practitioners: on the one hand, their professional skills are more crucial than ever; and on the other, they need technological tools and systems like never before.

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HOW CAN PRs CUT THROUGH THE CLUTTER?



IT'S ALL ABOUT SPEED...



75% OF JOURNALISTS WILL READ 10 OR LESS RELEASES IN FULL PER DAY



65%

OF JOURNALISTS WILL TAKE LESS THAN 10 SECONDS TO DECIDE WHETHER TO READ A RELEASE



63% OF JOURNALISTS WILL USE 7% OR LESS OF THE RELEASES THEY RECEIVE



MEDIA

FOREWORD

Not since the birth of broadcasting has the media landscape undergone greater change than in the past five years. The definition of “media” and the nature of PR have both changed radically, and their interaction is dramatically more complex.

The very terminology has changed. Journalists have become content creators and outsourcing has become an everyday reality for both media and PR professionals.

Thousands of editorial jobs have gone – 2500 in just three years, according to the MEAA – and journalists must now feed multiple channels where once they would have specialised in one. The boundaries between print, broadcast and online journalism are irreversibly blurred.

What has not changed is the importance of PR material as a major source of news. Our third survey has confirmed the value of traditional PR skills in supplying news content and the need for PR systems to keep up with constantly changing technology.

For our third *PR Perceptions and Media Realities*, we collected a smaller sample (96 media and 99 PR responses) and looked more deeply into each individual response.

The most telling message is that journalists are more desperately time-poor than ever, and a media release may have as little as five seconds to make its case:

- Email remains the preferred medium for receiving releases – with embedded links for video and other multimedia.
- Journalists receive up to 400 emailed media releases per day, with 50-100 being the most common figure.
- Two-thirds of journalists take less than 10 seconds to decide whether a release is worth reading.
- Over half of media surveyed publish less than one in every 20 releases they receive.
- The most common complaints journalists make about PR people are unchanged: too many phone calls, irrelevant releases and poor understanding of the media.

Journalists clearly want PR people to understand news value, be attuned to deadlines and news cycles, and be able to provide content in multiple formats to meet tight deadlines.

More than anything, individual journalists now need content in multiple formats – print journalists need video for their blogs, broadcasters need print content for their websites, and online specialists need everything from infographics to audio files.



EMAIL PREFERRED – IF IT’S RELEVANT

More than 90% of media prefer to receive media releases by email, either as text in the email or as an attachment or link, but those emails must be relevant to be read.

As the PR deluge overwhelms time-poor media, poorly written or irrelevant releases will be deleted within seconds, and future emails from the same sender may well be deleted too.

Sadly, the surest way to put media even further offside is to make follow-up phone calls – the very thing that many PRs consider a vital part of doing their job.

Although email rules, other technologies are still in contention. Social media and online newsrooms are each used by about a third of PRs to distribute releases, but journalists don’t want releases via social media, whereas they are beginning to embrace newsrooms.

At present only about 5% of media prefer to receive releases via online newsrooms, which seems to match media understanding of the extra content that can be accessed this way.

Media take-up of newsrooms might be expected to increase as multi-tasking media see how multi-media online newsrooms can meet their diverse content needs.

PR PERCEPTION

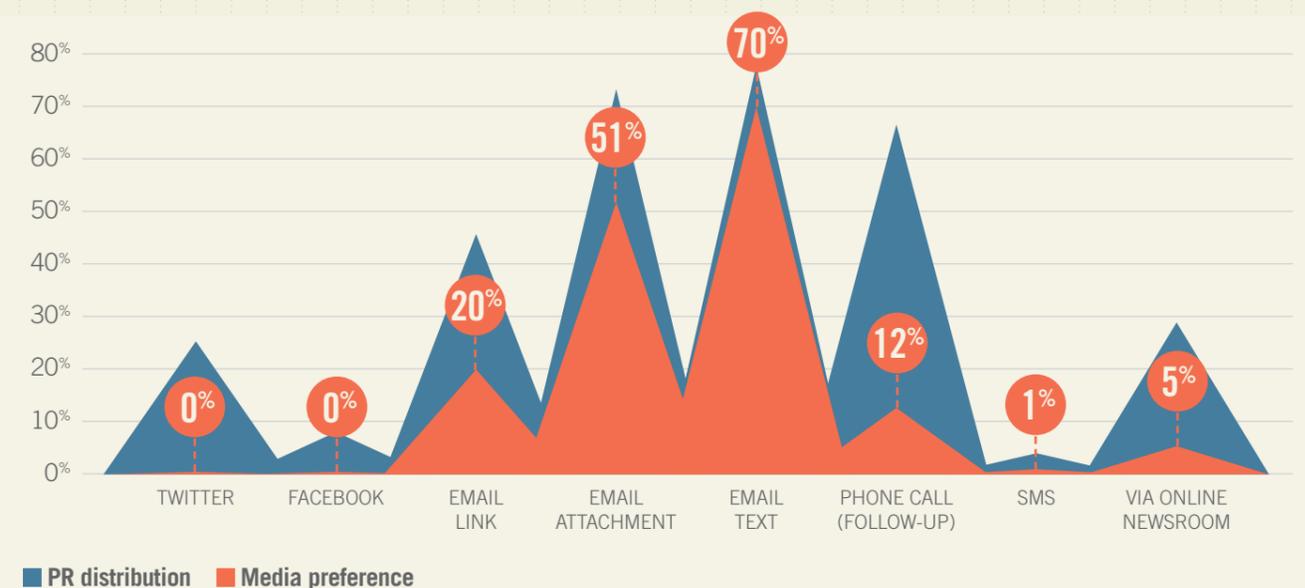
MOST PRs SEND RELEASES BY EMAIL, BUT A THIRD OF THEM ALSO USE TWITTER AND FACEBOOK, AND TWO-THIRDS MAKE FOLLOW-UP PHONE CALLS, WHILE A THIRD OF THEM USE ONLINE NEWSROOMS



MEDIA REALITY

MOST MEDIA PREFER EMAILED RELEASES, AND THEY USE THE PHONE TO CHASE MORE INFORMATION, WITH ONLINE NEWSROOMS EMERGING AS A FURTHER SOURCE – BUT NONE AT ALL WANT RELEASES VIA TWITTER OR FACEBOOK

DISTRIBUTION PREFERENCES



RELATIONSHIP BREAKDOWN

The main media gripes about PR remain as in past years – but there is a new concern by major media that PR is ignoring it in favour of blogs and social media.

Not that it's all one-sided: a simple emailed "no" would stop many PR follow-up calls – and quite a few journalists value their relationships with capable PR professionals.

"THEY LACK TARGETING AND UNDERSTANDING – IF THEY WANT ME TO COVER A STORY, THEY SHOULD KNOW WHAT I DO AND WHAT SORT OF ANGLE I NEED."

"PRs ALWAYS SEEM TO RING ON OUR PRODUCTION DAY – THE DAY WE ARE ON DEADLINE AND AT OUR BUSIEST."

"PROMISED VIDEO IS OFTEN CRITICAL IN STORIES AND IF IT COMES LATE OR NOT AT ALL, A STORY HAS TO BE ABANDONED."

"THERE'S AN INABILITY TO LOOK BEYOND BLOGS, WEBSITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA; TRADITIONAL PRINT MEDIA IS STILL HERE AND STILL REACHING THE RIGHT AUDIENCES."

"NEWSROOMS MAKE FAST DECISIONS ON STORIES, AND WE ALWAYS NEED CONTENT EVERY DAY."

PR PERCEPTION

PRs UNDERSTAND THAT JOURNALISTS ARE TIME-POOR BUT SEND MEDIA RELEASES TO MEET CLIENT REQUIREMENTS. THEY CONSIDER IT RUDE AND UNRESPONSIVE TO NOT ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF A RELEASE.

MEDIA REALITY

TIME-POOR JOURNALISTS DESPAIR OF PR PEOPLE WHO SEND IRRELEVANT OR POORLY WRITTEN RELEASES AND DELETE THEM WITHOUT SENDING A RESPONSE. THEY CONSIDER IT RUDE AND INTRUSIVE TO PHONE AND ASK IF A RELEASE HAS BEEN RECEIVED.

CUTTING THROUGH THE NOISE

"Cutting through the noise" is the single biggest challenge identified in both media and PR responses to the survey, and this problem appears to be getting worse each year.

Most journalists receive **50 to 100 emailed releases per day**, and each one has **less than 30 seconds** – even as little as 5 seconds – to catch the journalist's attention.

- 90% of journalists will receive more than 40 releases per day
- 65% of media will take less than 10 seconds to decide whether to read a release
- 75% of journalists will read no more than 10 of the releases they receive each day
- 63% of media will use less than 7% of the releases they receive

What journalists want from PRs remains notably consistent with previous years' surveys:

- Make it relevant to their publication, subject area and geographic location.
- Make the subject line a headline – simple, to the point, enough to be worth opening.
- Construct a proper news story – a proper head and intro, and don't bury the lead.
- Include contact details for someone who is willing and able to help, even after hours.
- Write like a journo, with facts instead of hyperbole, and correct grammar and style to minimise subbing or re-writing.
- Make all your material easily accessible, with main text in the email body or a Word document, embedded video links, and conveniently archived images and bios.

As in previous years, doing these things will improve your chances of publication – and phoning to ask about your release will almost invariably reduce your chances.

PR PERCEPTION

MOST PRs WHO DON'T KNOW WHETHER A MEDIA OUTLET HAS OPENED A RELEASE WILL CONSIDER THE MEDIA TO BE UNRESPONSIVE, LAZY OR EVEN RUDE – AND WILL THEREFORE PHONE TO CHECK IF THE RELEASE HAS BEEN RECEIVED.



MEDIA REALITY

MOST MEDIA READ AND USE LESS THAN 10% OF THE RELEASES THAT ARRIVE BY EMAIL AND DO NOT RESPOND TO THE OTHERS – AND NOTHING ANNOYS THEM MORE THAN PHONE CALLS TO CHECK IF A RELEASE HAS BEEN RECEIVED.

"FOLLOW-UP EMAILS AND PHONE CALLS ARE IRRITATING. IF YOUR PRESS RELEASE INTERESTS ME AND I CAN USE IT, I WILL BE IN TOUCH."

MULTI-TASKING MEDIA

On average, the media respondents in this year's survey work across up to three different publishing channels, a situation which was unheard of less than a decade ago.

Newspapers still dominate, with **67% of respondents publishing in this most traditional of media channels**, but **online news media are not far behind at 61%**.

Emerging rapidly are **social media channels, nominated by 46% of media**, while radio and **magazines sit just above and below 25%**.

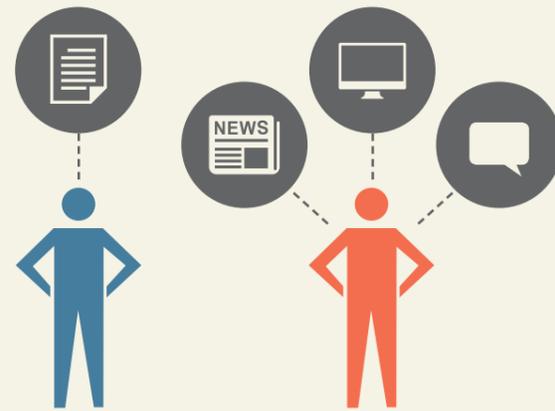
Television accounts for just 13% of media in the survey, just ahead of non-news online media including bloggers and aggregate sites such as BuzzFeed.

With journalists working across such diverse channels, PRs may need to provide, for example, print and online video content to a favoured journalist to get the message out.

“YOUR STORY WILL ONLY GET 10-20 SECONDS ON THE RADIO, IF IT TAKES YOU 5 MINS TO EXPLAIN IT, IT'S ALREADY TOO MUCH.”

PR PERCEPTION

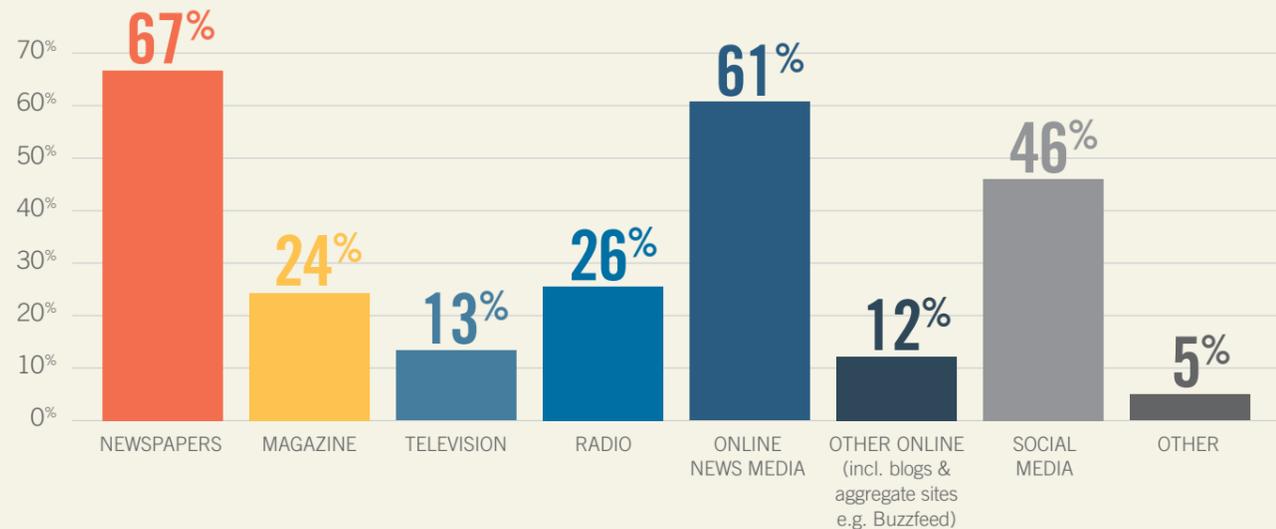
MOST PRs TARGET MEDIA IN A VARIETY OF PLATFORMS, WITH A FOCUS ON TEXT ONLY RELEASES.



MEDIA REALITY

TODAY'S MEDIA PROFESSIONALS TYPICALLY WORK ACROSS THREE DIFFERENT MEDIA CHANNELS, MAKING THEM VERY MUCH MULTI-TASKING MULTI-MEDIA JOURNALISTS.

MEDIA OUTLETS PUBLISHED TO BY JOURNALISTS



MULTIMEDIA SUPPORT

Nowhere is the shortage of media resources more apparent than in the reliance of media on the PR profession for the multi-media support which was previously produced in-house by well-resourced media organisations.

PR responses show that PR is meeting this need to a substantial degree, but media responses show that there is a need for even more.

Video supply is increasing and the demand is even greater, with nearly half of PRs supplying custom video to support a release, and a third of media wanting even more. Explainer videos are only half as common, and a quarter of media would like more of these too.

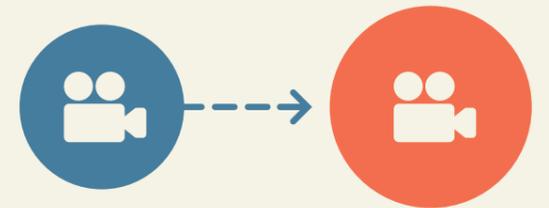
Infographics are even more in demand, with more than half of PRs supplying them and almost half of the media asking for more.

As journalists have less time to brief an art department or video unit, and in-house services themselves are pared back, the provision of multi-media support can be expected to make a crucial difference in whether a particular PR story can be published.

SUPPLIED VIDEO IS OFTEN CRITICAL IN STORIES.

PR PERCEPTION

MOST PRs ARE ABLE TO DELIVER VIDEOS AND INFOGRAPHICS, EITHER IN-HOUSE OR OUTSOURCED, AND ABOUT HALF OF THEM SUPPLY SUCH MATERIAL EITHER AS A MEDIA RELEASE OR AS FOLLOW-UP SUPPORTING MATERIAL



MEDIA REALITY

HALF OF THE SURVEYED JOURNALISTS WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE MORE OF THIS TYPE OF SUPPORTING MATERIAL THAN THEY CURRENTLY RECEIVE, WITH ALMOST A QUARTER OF THEM WANTING “MUCH MORE” VIDEO MATERIAL

JOURNALIST DEMAND AND PR SUPPLY OF MULTIMEDIA CONTENT

CUSTOM VIDEO CONTENT

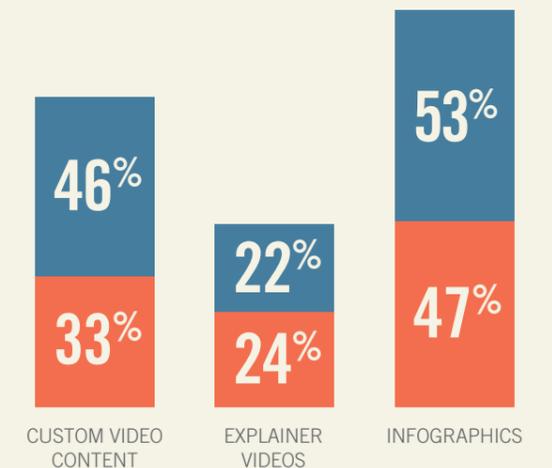
- PRs who have supplied it as part of a media release
- Journalists who want more of it

EXPLAINER VIDEOS

- PRs who have supplied them as part of a media release
- Journalist who want more of them

INFOGRAPHICS

- PRs who have supplied them as part of a media release
- Journalist who want more of them



THE IMPORTANCE OF NEWSROOMS

It's fair to say that 2015 is the year of the online newsroom, with industry leaders setting a new benchmark for user-friendly technology and at least two new players entering the field.

Fully **83% of media professionals say it's important for a company or organisation to have an online newsroom**, and **30% rating it "extremely important"**.

Figures for PRs are lower, but still significant, with **53% rating a newsroom as important**.

This disparity might have something to do with who pays for newsrooms – a PR has to make a case for the effort and cost of a newsroom, whereas media simply use what it provides.

Even so, more than half of PRs see an online newsroom as an important asset, and many of them are likely to be aware of the latest multi-media technology.

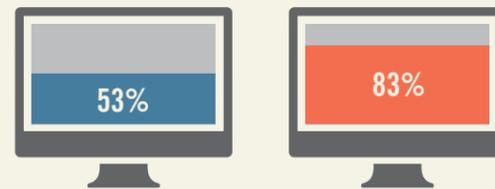
What they might see as less important is the sort of simple print-and-pictures archive which is sometimes called an online newsroom but actually feel far short of what's possible.

Media people may be thinking of little more than print-and-pictures when they rate an online newsroom, since they have been using this type of archive since the turn of the century.

But as multi-media journalists become more familiar with true multi-media newsrooms, PRs will find newsrooms to be an increasingly effective way to reach the full spectrum of media.

PR PERCEPTION

53% OF PRs THINK IT'S IMPORTANT FOR A COMPANY OR ORGANISATION TO HAVE AN ONLINE NEWSROOM, WITH 14% RATING IT EXTREMELY IMPORTANT.

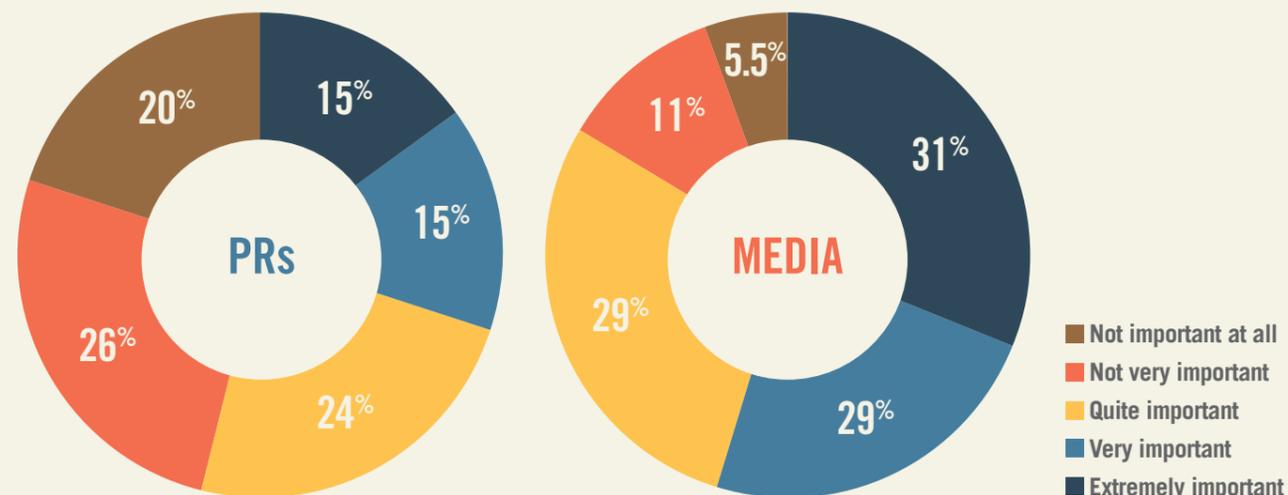


MEDIA REALITY

83% OF JOURNALISTS THINK IT'S IMPORTANT FOR A COMPANY OR ORGANISATION TO HAVE AN ONLINE NEWSROOM, WITH 29% RATING IT EXTREMELY IMPORTANT.

"PRs NEED TO BE MORE PREPARED WITH OPTIONS TO ENHANCE A STORY ACROSS MEDIA CHANNELS."

PR VS MEDIA ON THE IMPORTANCE OF ONLINE NEWSROOMS



NEWSROOMS: WHAT MEDIA WANT

When media and PRs are asked what they consider most important in an online newsroom, their main priorities are remarkably similar ... but they diverge in the multi-media details.

Top priorities – **latest media releases, PR contact information and media release archive** – hover around **70% on both lists**, followed by a **search function for all content, at just over 50%**.

But PRs place much more importance on image preview and download, and the gap widens further for video and audio preview and download, where twice as many PRs consider these features to be important.

The biggest divergence is in optimisation for mobile devices, where four times as many PRs consider it important as journalists do, even though two thirds of media find mobile devices 'extremely useful' in general.

Since it is the PRs who run the online newsrooms, it is likely that preview, download and mobile features will become increasingly common inclusions, and media can be expected to embrace them once they are generally available.

This table shows the priorities of PRs and media, and gives an insight into where PRs are likely to harness leading-edge technology to serve the needs of the media.

PR PERCEPTION

PRs RATE PR CONTACT INFORMATION AS THE MOST IMPORTANT FEATURE (68%) FOR AN ONLINE NEWSROOM, THEN LATEST MEDIA RELEASES (67%), A MEDIA RELEASE ARCHIVE (65%) AND A SEARCH FUNCTION (55%). MULTI-MEDIA PREVIEWS AND DOWNLOADS RATE AN AVERAGE OF 40%.

MEDIA REALITY

JOURNALISTS RATE THE LATEST MEDIA RELEASES AS MOST IMPORTANT (74%), THEN PR CONTACT INFORMATION (70%), A MEDIA RELEASE ARCHIVE (62%) AND A SEARCH FUNCTION (52%). ON AVERAGE, ALMOST 25% RATE MULTI-MEDIA PREVIEWS AND DOWNLOADS AS IMPORTANT.

"PROMISED VIDEO IS OFTEN CRITICAL IN STORIES AND IF IT COMES LATE OR NOT AT ALL, THE STORY HAS TO BE ABANDONED."

FUNCTIONALITY	PR PRIORITIES	MEDIA PRIORITIES
Search function for all content	55	52
Email notification of new content added	36	35
Latest media releases	67	74
Image preview and download	50	40
Video preview and download	37	19
Audio preview and download	25	12
All related multimedia bundled together with media releases	36	33
Content placed into categories	38	29
Archive of media releases	65	62
Mobile optimisation	54	13
Access to company's social media channels	52	25
Ability to share content with your own social media channels	48	15
PR contact information	68	71
Direct link to newsroom from homepage of public website	48	32

SOCIAL MEANS SOCIAL

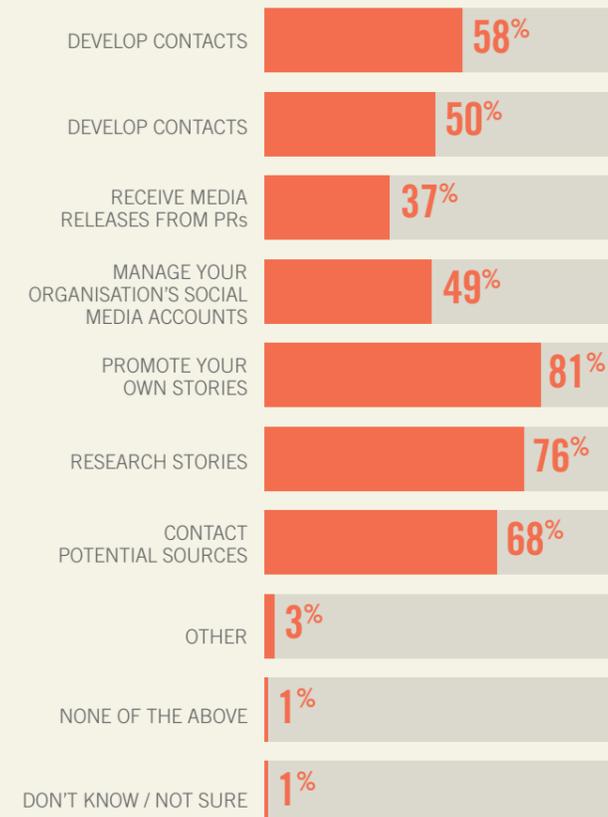
Social media activity is very much a part of the professional and private lives of media and PRs alike – **but it's not a good way to distribute media releases.**

Fully **91% of PRs and 85% of media use Facebook for personal purposes**, and **professional use is around 65%** by both groups. Twitter has less personal use (**64% of PRs, 54% of media**) but comes into its own for professional use (**80% PR, 85% media**).

By contrast, Facebook and Twitter fail utterly for distributing media releases. Not one of the media expressed a preference for receiving releases this way, even though 36% acknowledge it is part of their social activity.

This is not to suggest that social media channels are not useful in the media world, as the vast majority of PRs (**96%**) and media (**85%**) find them useful in doing their jobs.

HOW JOURNALISTS USE SOCIAL MEDIA



PR PERCEPTION

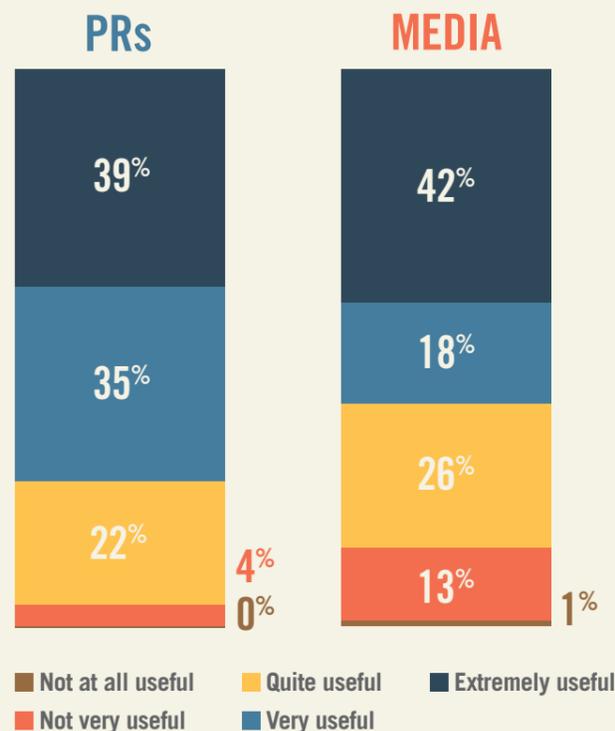
IN THE PAST YEAR, 33% OF PRs HAVE DISTRIBUTED MEDIA RELEASES BY TWITTER OR FACEBOOK – MUCH LESS THAN THE EMAIL DISTRIBUTION, BUT 4% UP ON LAST YEAR.



MEDIA REALITY

EXACTLY 0% OF JOURNALISTS PREFERRED TO RECEIVE RELEASES BY TWITTER OR FACEBOOK – BY CONTRAST, EVEN THE MUCH-MALIGNED PHONE CALL WAS FAVOURED BY 12%.

USEFULNESS OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN PERFORMING JOB



WINNING PUBLIC TRUST

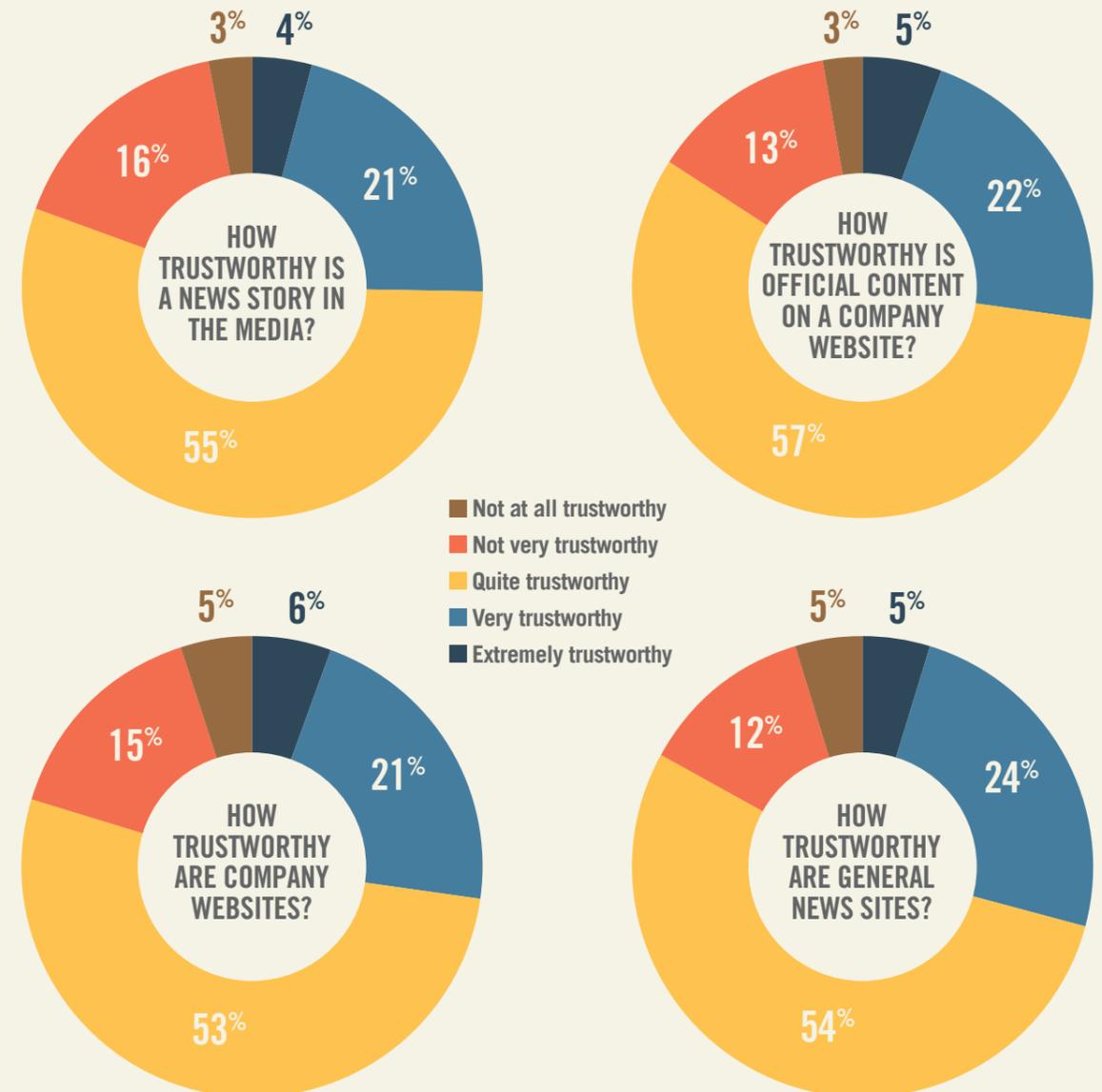
No matter what the level of trust between media and PRs, what matters more is how much the public trusts the various forms of media – and the news here is quite encouraging.

Wieck has collated the first findings of a major survey it has commissioned into public perceptions of the entire spectrum of published information in all its forms and media.

The most encouraging result is that both news and corporate websites score better than 80% public trust for their overall content and for individual stories.

This suggests there is real value for PRs to get their message out not only through the media but also through the news and general content of their own corporate websites.

PUBLIC FINDINGS ON TRUSTFULNESS



**“ A GOOD PR
IS GREAT
FOR A GOOD
JOURNALIST. ”**



ABOUT WIECK

ESTABLISHED IN 1991 BY VETERANS OF UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL, WIECK MEDIA AIMED TO FILL THE GROWING NEED FOR TIMELY, PRECISE DELIVERY OF DIGITAL IMAGES TO NEWS OUTLETS.

Wieck began Australasian operations in 2005. Its local team has built on long experience in leading media and public relations organisations to deliver online multi-media newsrooms with a uniquely client-focused use of the best available technology.

Wieck uses leading-edge compression and editing, advanced web technologies and searchable databases to keep up with the changing world of digital media.

This year it has achieved a major step-change in the functionality of its core systems for building online multi-media newsrooms that meet both the current and evolving needs of both the PR and media professions.

Wieck eNewsrooms give PRs everything they need to make their material readily available to all of today's diverse media:

- **Email alerts delivering everything journalists need to make a decision on your release.**
- **Full social media integration of all newsroom content.**
- **Comprehensive photo, audio and video galleries.**
- **Preview thumbnails of images with links back to the newsroom for download – no large email attachments.**
- **Links back to the newsroom to preview videos which can be copied as embedded codes or downloaded in formats ranging from full broadcast to mobile web formats.**

Wieck's unmatched editorial experience makes clients and their audiences breathe easier when deadlines are near, its seasoned management team and dedicated staff delivering unmatched customer satisfaction.

Media-friendly Wieck eNewsrooms give the media fast access to print-friendly, broadcast-ready and online-savvy digital assets – exactly what PRs need to supply in the never-ending quest to get their message out.

Wieck solutions never require significant IT staff support, so clients can be sure that Wieck will enhance their capabilities without taxing their resources.

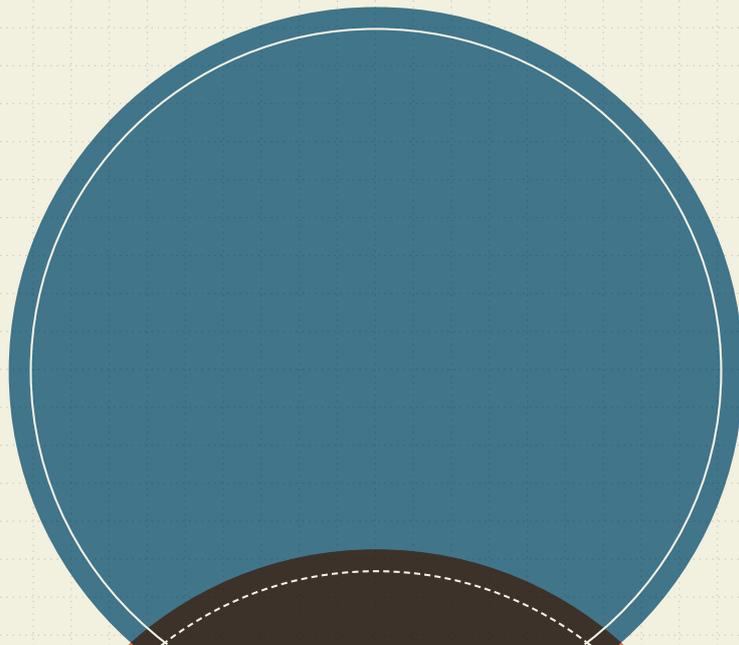
Our eNewsrooms comply with the Website Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0) to enable access for users of all abilities.



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