

# The State of PR 2020

How PR teams build relationships, leverage technology and adapt to unpredictable times

A study by

**MUCK RACK**

# In this report, we seek to answer:



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How are PR teams spending their time?



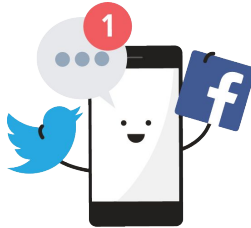
2

What are the top challenges PR pros face?



3

How do PR pros try to reach journalists?



4

How do PR pros use social media?



5

How are PR budgets changing and how are teams allocating them?



1

# How are PR teams spending their time?

## Average daily productivity software usage: PR pros use email, spreadsheets and documents

Which of the following general productivity tools do you spend the most time using on an average day?

Email



Documents



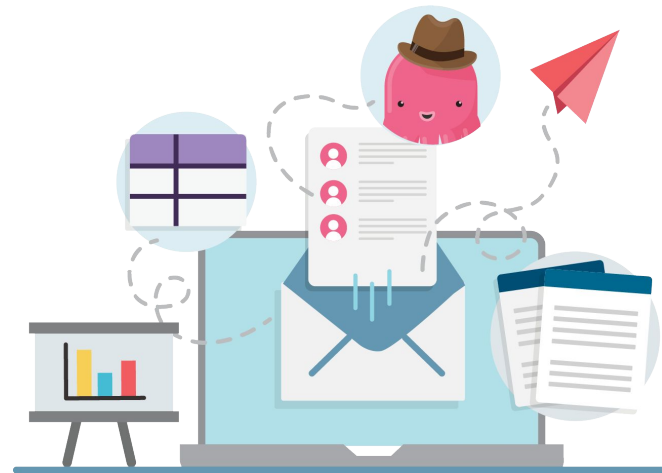
Spreadsheets



Presentations



None of the above



## Average communications and conferencing software usage: Video conferencing is as widely used as email

Which of the following types of communications and conferencing software do you spend the most time using on an average day?

Video conferencing



Email



Direct messaging



Phone



Other



This survey was sent out after stay-at-home orders were announced, which likely contributed to the spike on popularity of video conferencing

## Average daily project management software usage: Most PR pros are using multiple solutions- a mix of spreadsheets and project management software

Which of the following types of project management software do you spend the most time using on an average day?

Spreadsheets



Dedicated project management software



None of the above



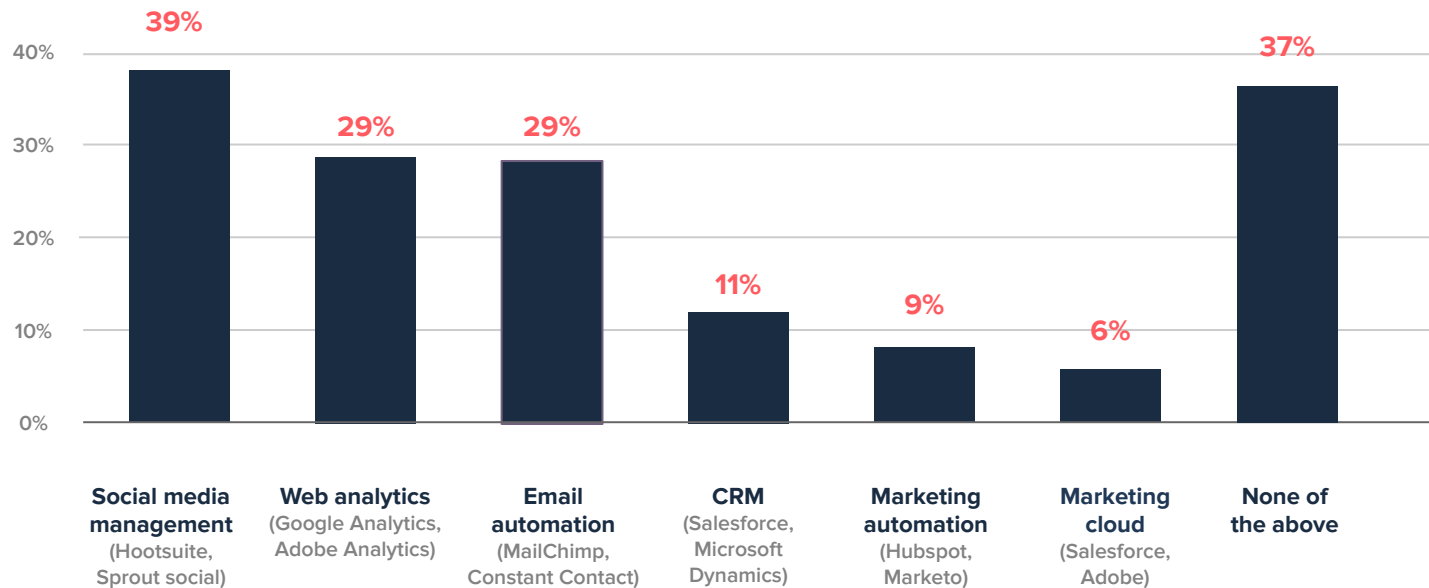
Other



Only 81% are using a project management solution (19% are not using anything). This data suggests that most using project management software are also supplementing with spreadsheets

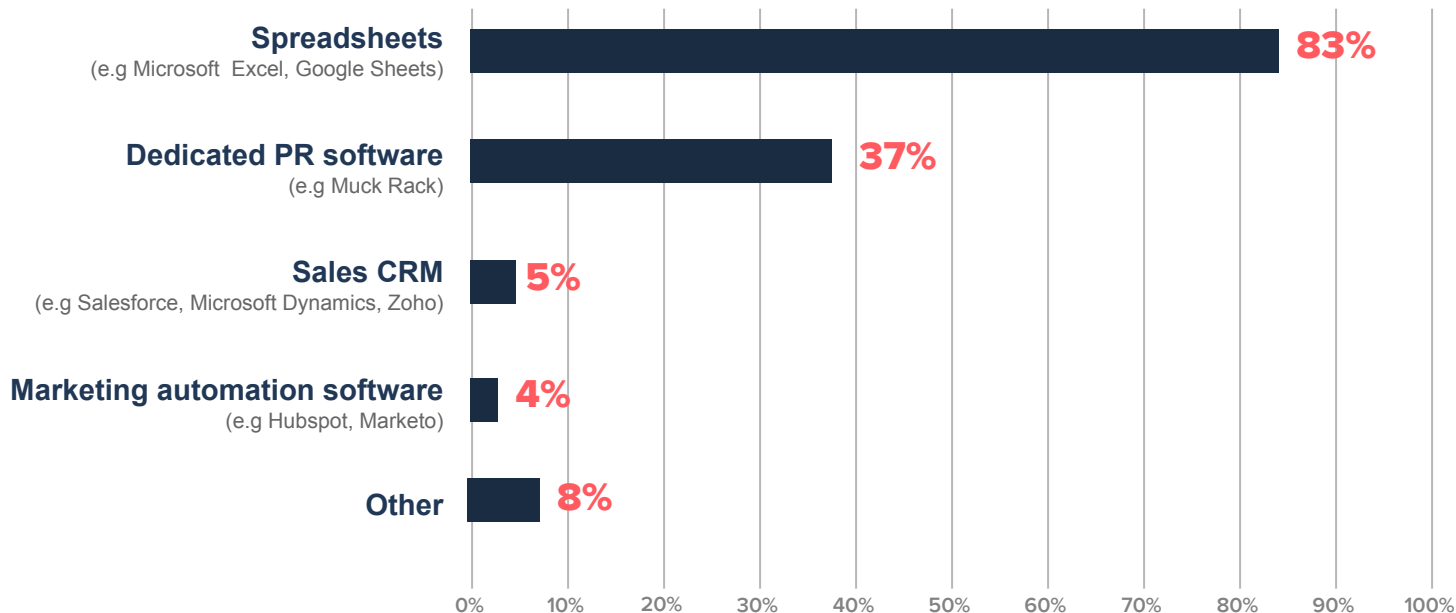
## Average daily marketing and social media management usage: 37% are not using any marketing, automation or social media management tools

Which of the following types of marketing and social media management tools do you spend the most time using on an average day?



## Most PR pros store media lists in **spreadsheets**, with **about a third** using **dedicated PR software**

Where do you and your team store media lists?





## While **only 5%** previously said they **use a sales CRM**, **25%** say they **use a CRM to track media relationships**

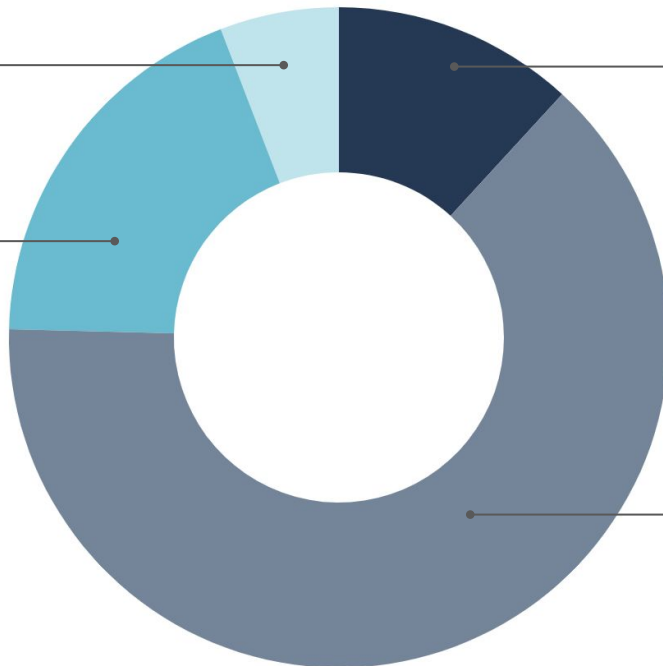
'CRM' is software that I:

**6%** Rely on heavily to track relationships with the media

**19%** Use occasionally to track relationships with the media

**12%** Have not heard before or am not familiar with

**63%** Have heard of but do not use to track relationships with the media



## Media databases are the most used PR tool, followed by monitoring software

Which of the following types of PR tools do you spend the most time using on an average day?

Media/Journalist database



68%

News monitoring



49%

Wire service/newswire



19%

None of the above



21%

21% of PR pros are not currently using *any* PR software!



# What are the top challenges PR pros face?

# Top challenges include **measuring business impact**, **tightening budgets** and **lack of quantifiable measurement**

Rank the following PR/Communications challenges your company faces

Difficulty measuring business impact



Tightening budgets



Lack of quantifiable measurement



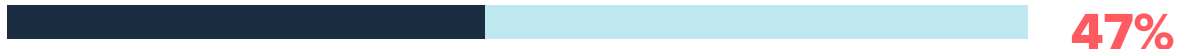
Finding and engaging with relevant sources



Tracking media mentions, compiling clips, building coverage reports



Recruiting/retaining the right talent



Collaborating effectively with team and/or other departments



## PR's biggest challenges during C-19 are loss in business revenue and placing coverage

What have been your company's biggest challenges during the COVID-19 outbreak?

Loss in clients/business revenue



Placing coverage in the new news cycle



Finding relevant angles for pitches



Scaling back/Elimination of PR resources and tools



Most say that **earning coverage** and **measurable results** are the top ways for PR to increase value

How can PR increase its value inside your organization?

Coverage/media relationships



Measurable results



Internal communication



Team collaboration

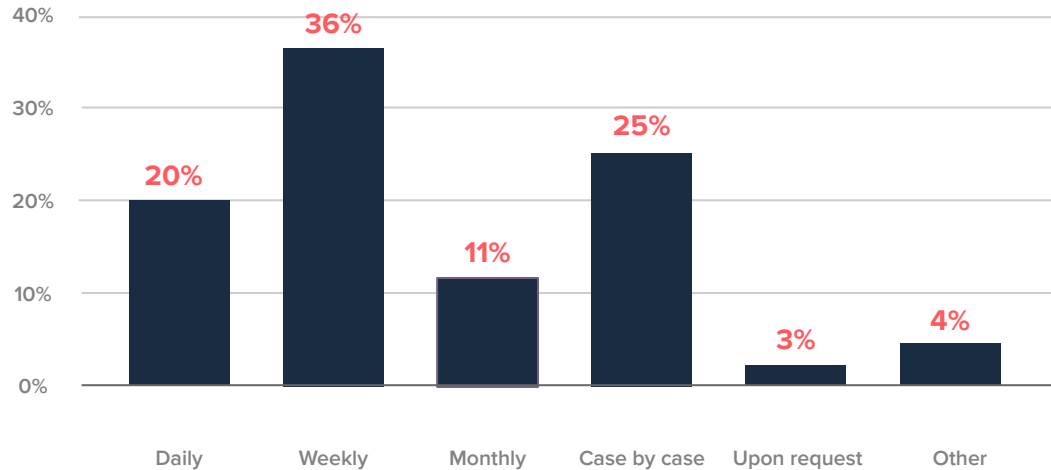


Technology



## Most brief their executive team **weekly**, or on a **case-by-case** basis

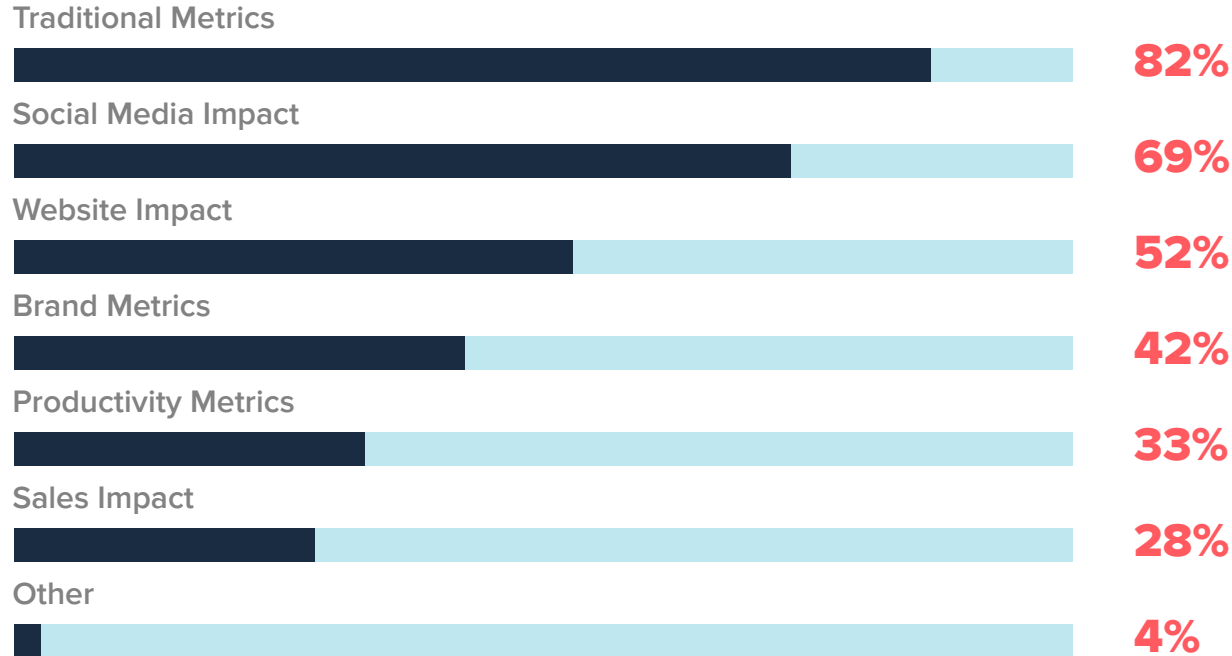
How often is your executive team briefed on PR and communications activities?



Most brief their executive team weekly (**36%**), followed by on a case-by-case basis (**25%**) and daily (**20%**)

## Over 50% measure success to stakeholders, executives and clients using a mixture of traditional metrics, social impact and website impact

Which of the following metrics do you use to showcase the success of your PR and communication efforts for stakeholders/executives/clients?





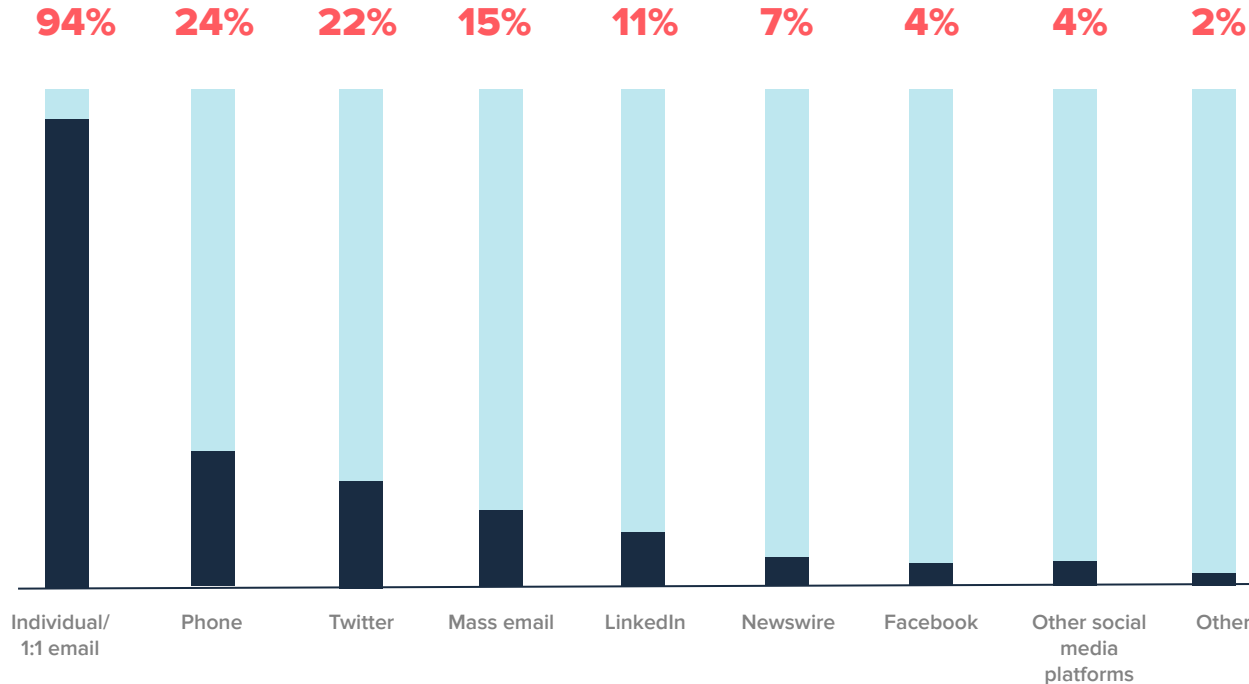


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# How do PR pros try to reach journalists?

# 94% say that **individual, 1:1 emails** are the most effective way to pitch journalists

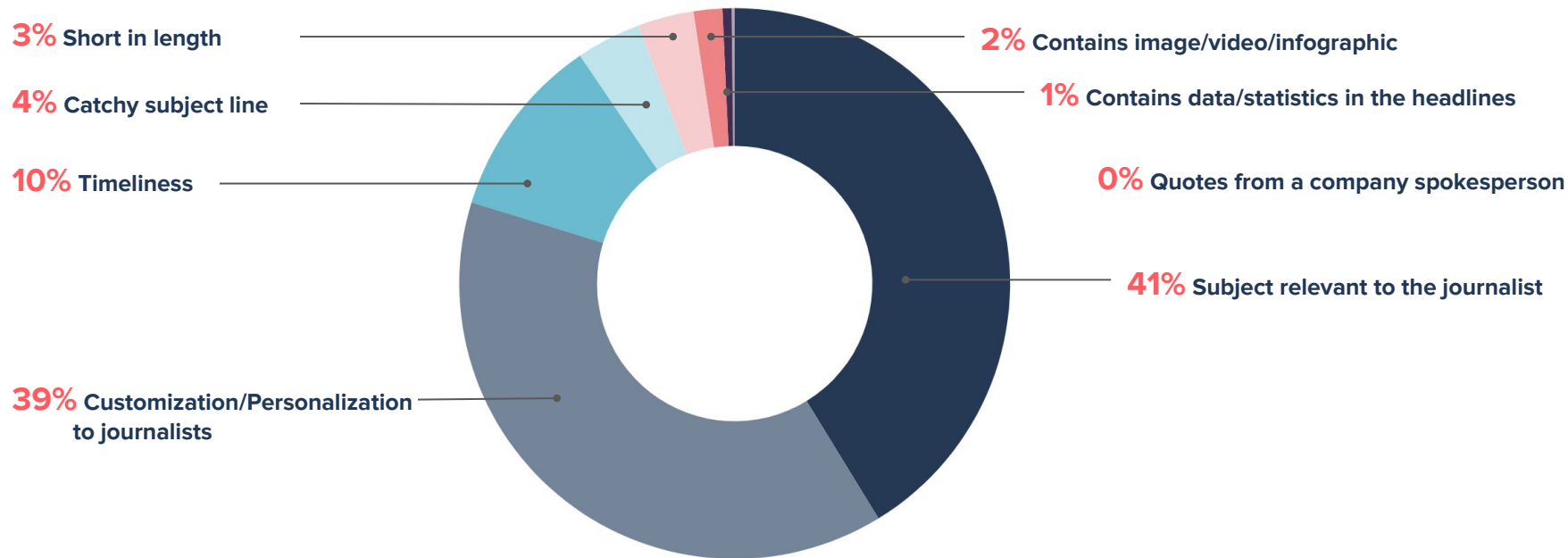
Which of the following channels do you find to be the most effective for pitching journalists?



In our 2020 State of Journalism survey, **93%** of journalists agreed that Individual, 1:1 emails are the best way to pitch them.

80% say **personalization, customization, or a relevant topic** are the most important things to include in a pitch

Which of the following component do you believe is most important in a pitch?



85% say **morning** is the best time to send a pitch, while 64% of journalists also said they **preferred morning pitches** in the State of Journalism

### When is generally the best time to send a pitch?

Early morning, 5am-9am



Late morning, 9am-12pm



Early afternoon, 12pm-3pm



Late afternoon, 3pm-6pm



Evening, 6pm-10pm

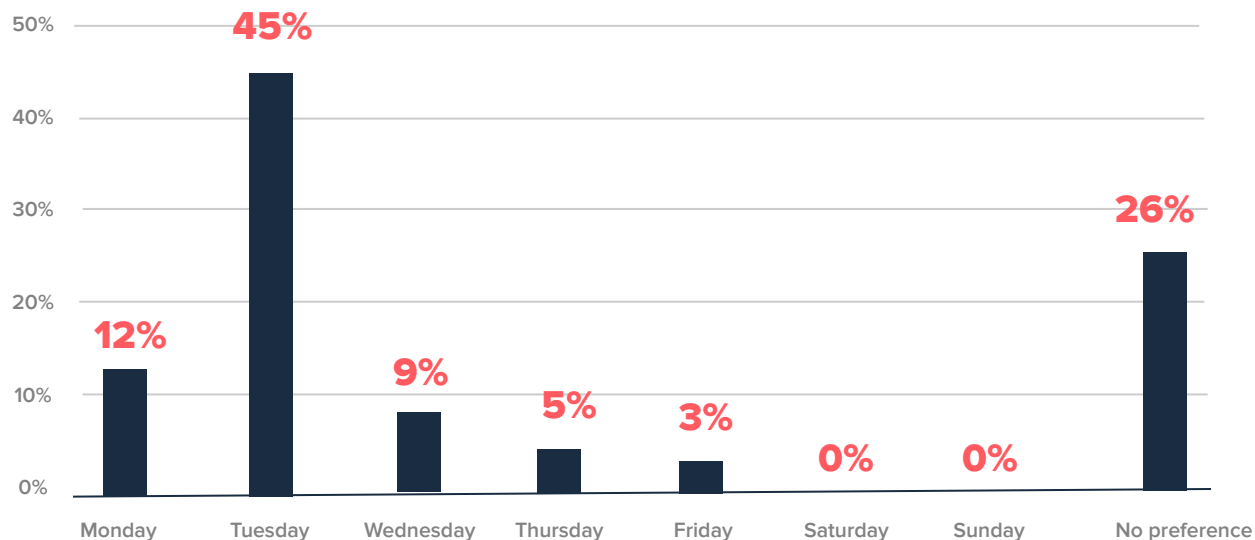


Overnight, 11pm-5am



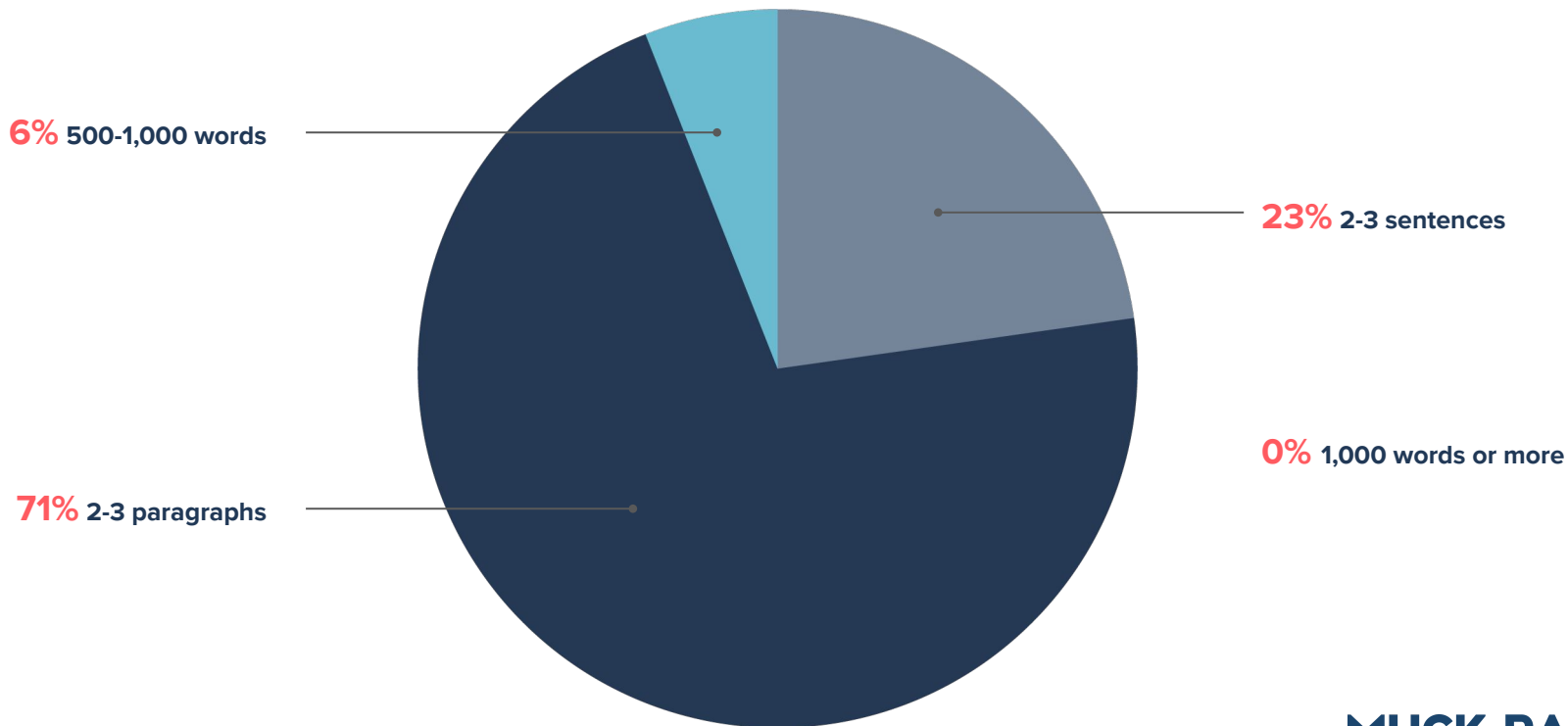
Almost half (45%) say Tuesday was the best day to send a pitch, while most journalists said Monday (20%)

On what day of the week do you most like to send pitches?



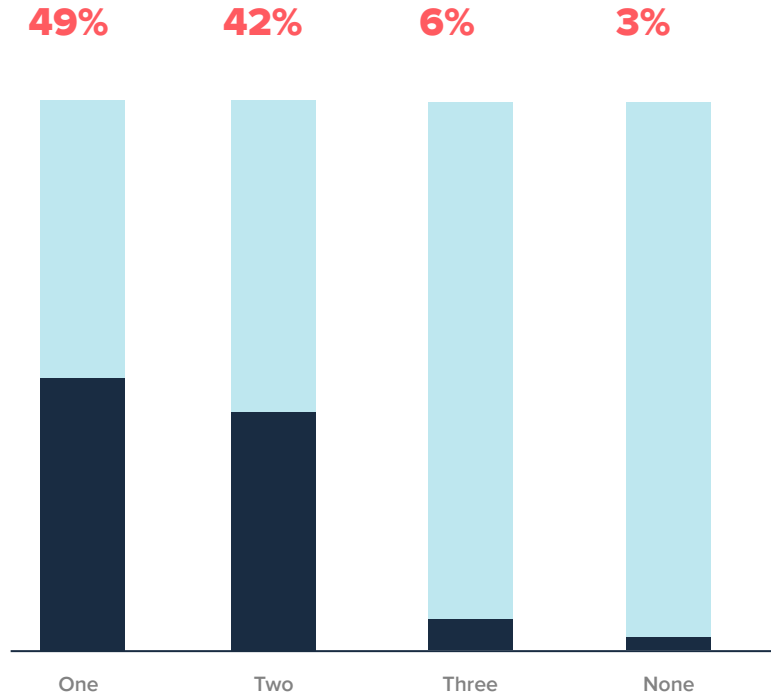
## 94% cap their pitches at 2-3 paragraphs

How long is the average pitch you send to journalists?



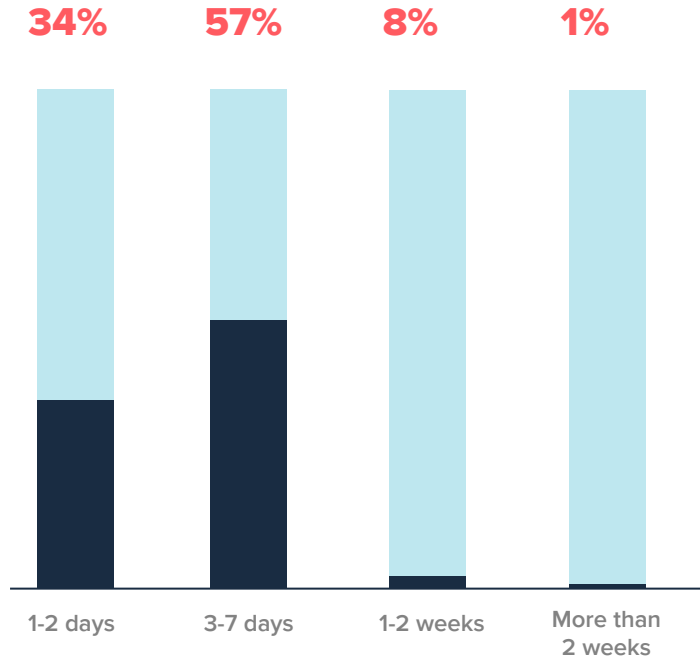
**Around half** say that **1 follow-up is acceptable**, which **55%** of journalists agreed with - but **only 27%** of journalists wanted to receive a second

How many follow-up emails are acceptable to send after your initial pitch?



91% say that pitch follow-ups are **best sent within the first week**, and 83% of journalists agreed

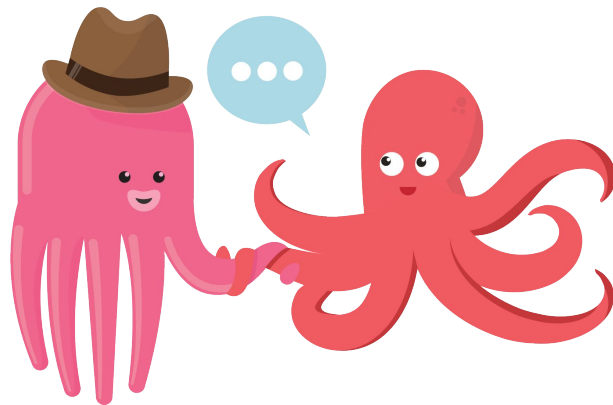
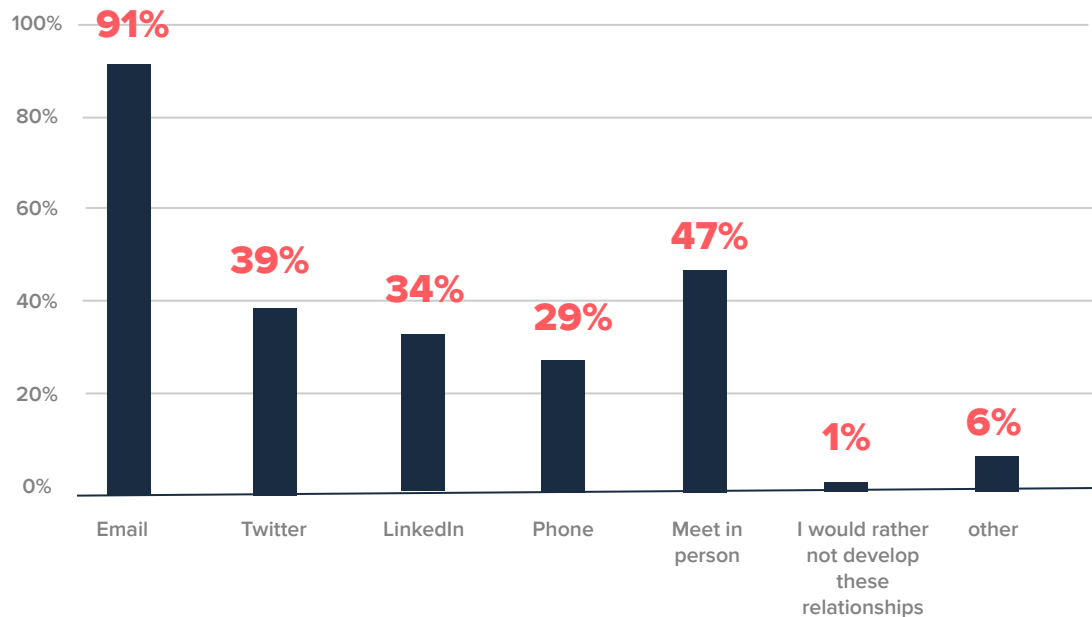
How long after an initial pitch is it OK to follow-up with a journalist you have not heard back from?





**91%** like to maintain a relationship **over email**, and **84%** of journos agreed

After you've worked with a journalist on a story, how do you prefer to maintain a professional relationship?



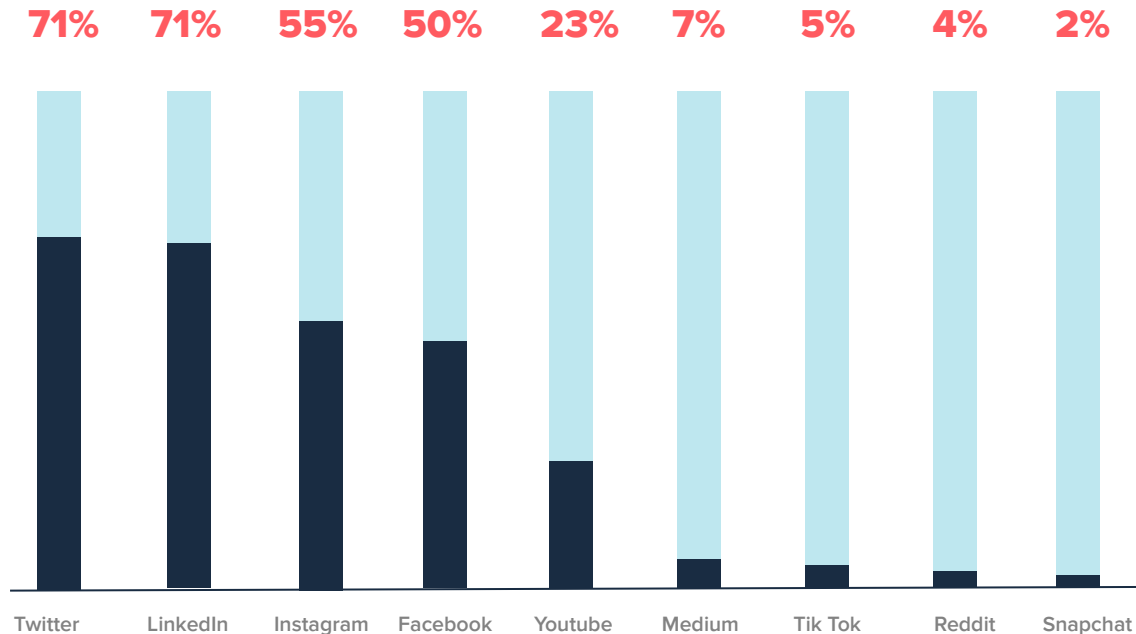


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## How do PR pros use social media?

# Twitter and LinkedIn will both be **equally important** to communication strategies in 2020

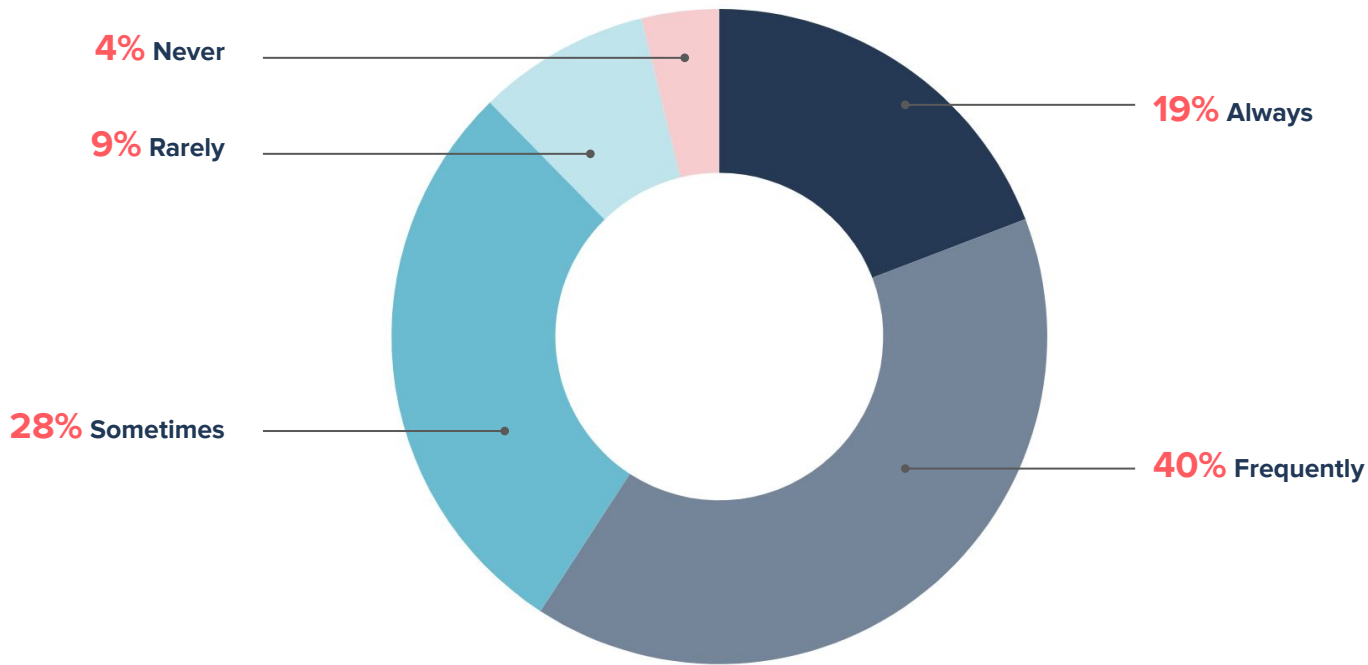
Which of the following social networks will be the most important for your company's social media and communications strategy?



In the 2019 survey, **71%** also said Twitter was most important, though only **52%** each said they consider LinkedIn and Instagram most important.

Almost 60% always or frequently follow journalists on social, which 75% of journalists said they like

How often do you follow journalists on social media before pitching them?



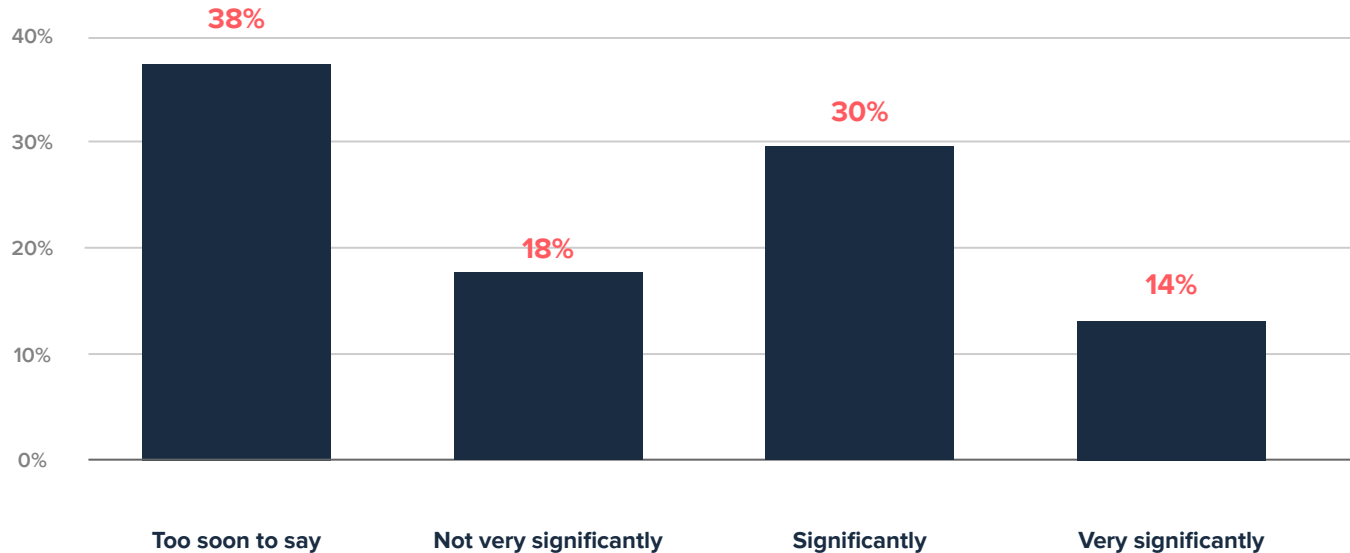


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**How are PR budgets  
changing and how are  
teams spending them?**

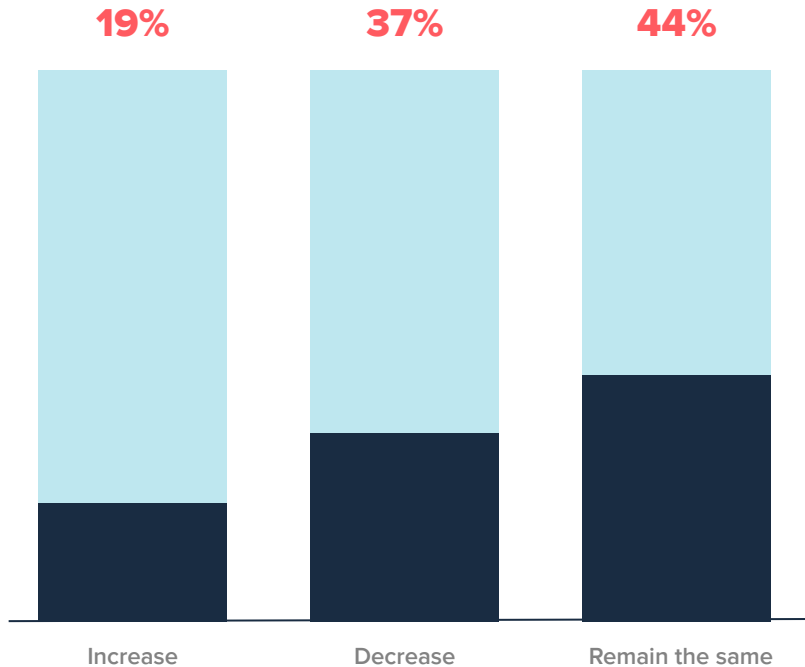
44% expect COVID-19 to **significantly** affect their budgeting, while 38% think it's too soon to say

To what degree has COVID-19 impacted your communications/PR budgeting?



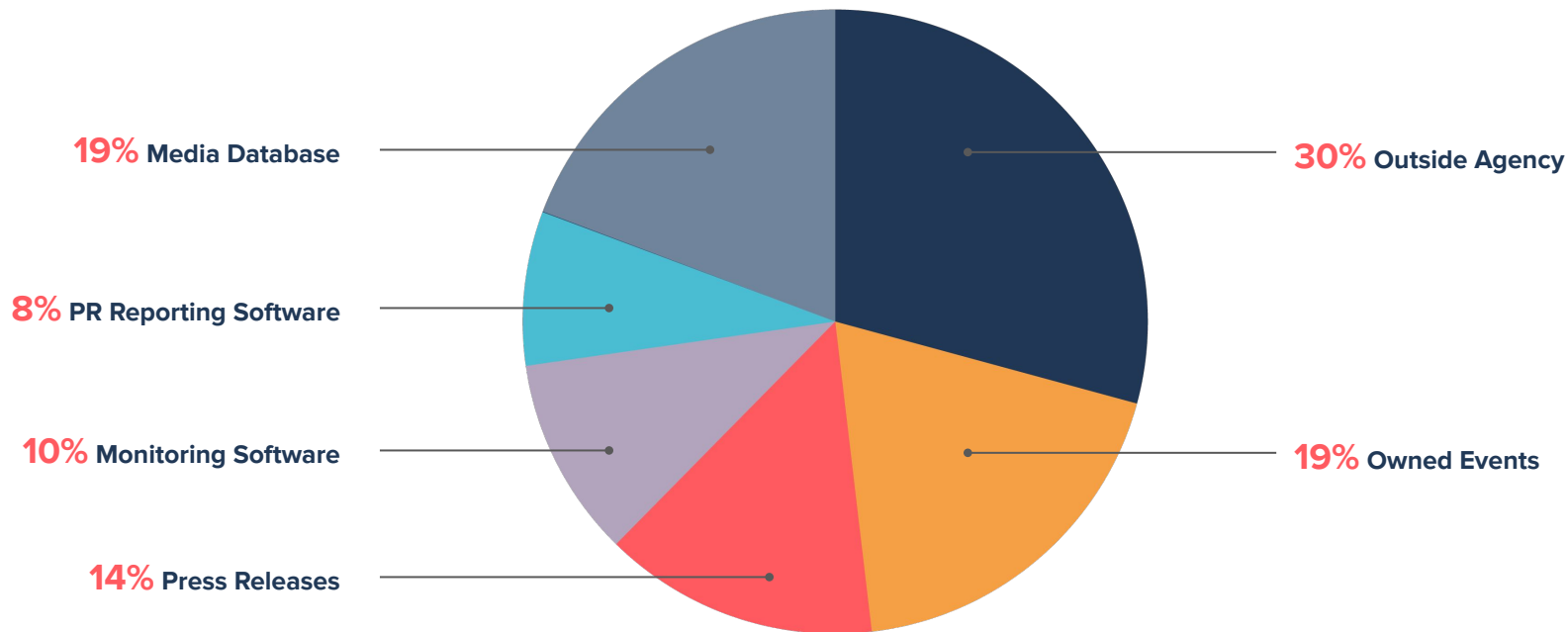
63% say their budget will either **increase or remain the same** over the next year

Over the next year, my company's budget for communications/PR compared to 2019 will:

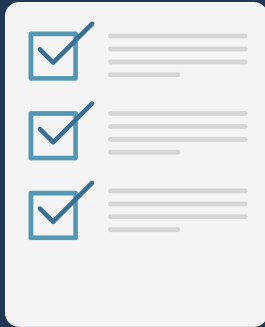


## Most PR spend goes toward **outside agencies**, followed by **media databases** and **owned events**

Where do you spend the highest % of your PR budget (not including employee salary)?





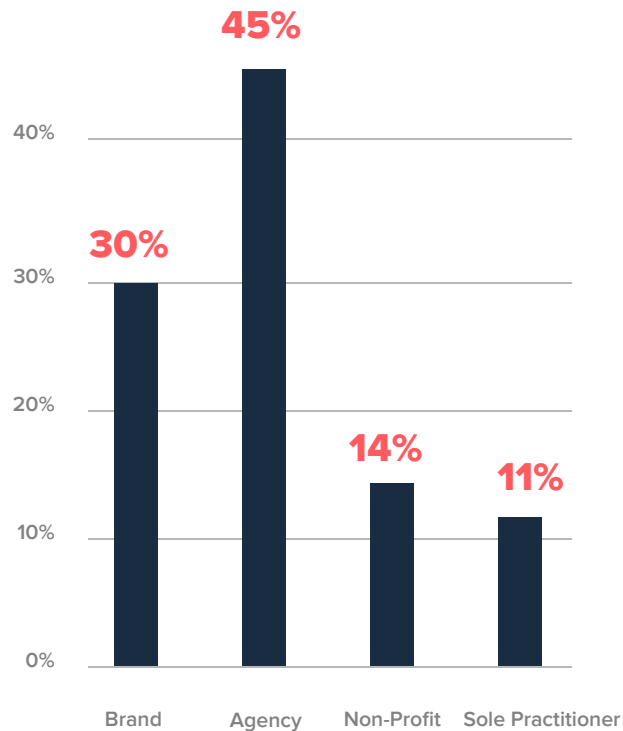


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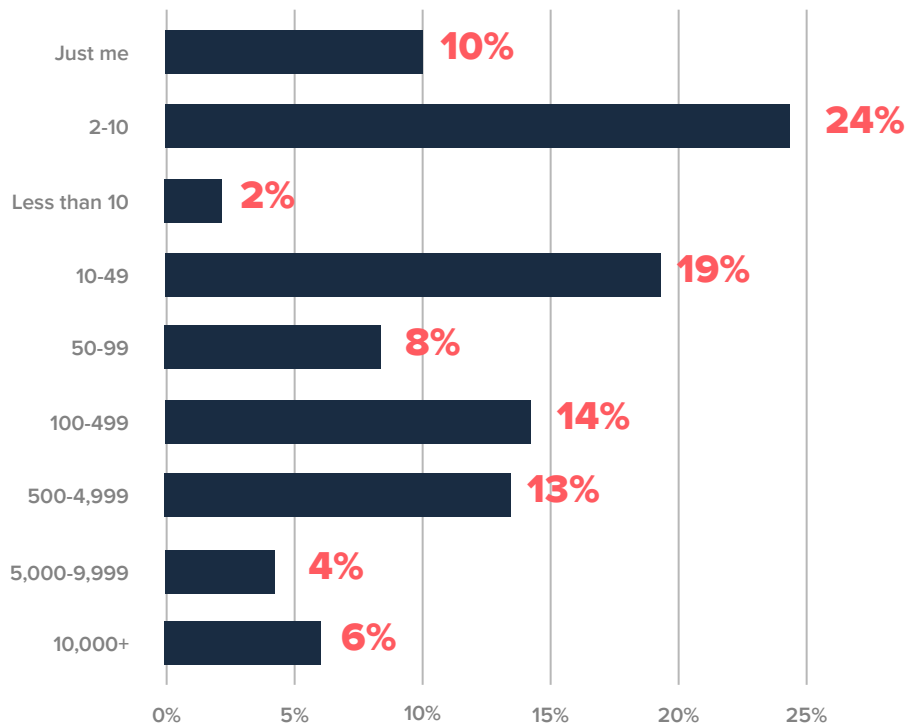
# Who took this survey?

# Company types and sizes

## COMPANY TYPE

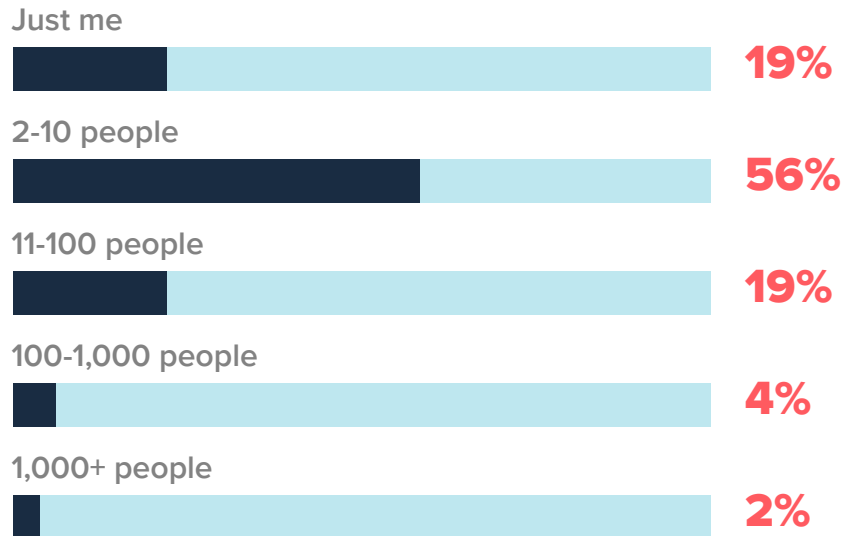


## COMPANY SIZE (by number of employees)

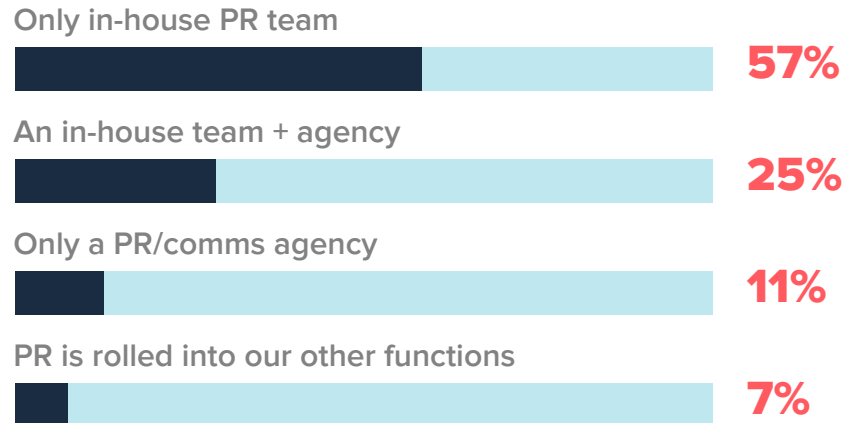


## Size of PR team and company PR management

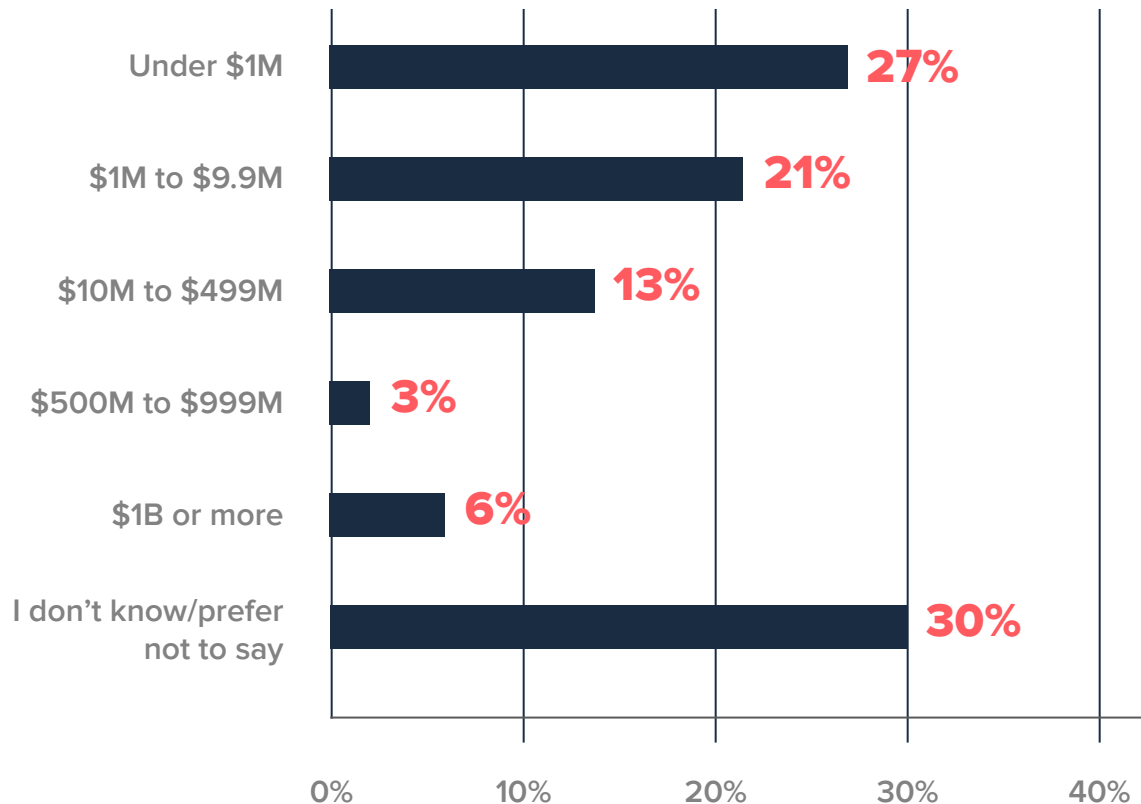
### How large is your entire company's PR/communications team?



### My organization's PR is managed by:



## Annual company revenue





# In conclusion

## 4 Key Takeaways

- 1 PR pros track media relationships in a variety of places—**83%** use spreadsheets, **37%** use dedicated software and **5%** use CRM.
- 2 PR's biggest challenges during COVID-19 are loss in business revenue and placing coverage. **44%** say the pandemic will affect their budget, while **37%** think it's too soon to say.
- 3 PR pros say difficulty measuring business impact was their top challenge, followed by tightening budgets and a lack of quantifiable measurement.
- 4 Most PR pros agree that pitches should be shorter than 3 paragraphs and sent as 1:1 emails some time in the morning. This is consistent with journalist preferences according to The State of Journalism report.

# Thank you!

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