



# CISION'S 2018 GLOBAL STATE OF THE MEDIA REPORT

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It's been both an extraordinary and challenging year for journalism — to say the least. On one hand, the profession has never been under greater attack. Constant accusations of fake news, anti-media sentiment coming from many of the world's politicians and a seemingly overwhelming supply of competing content has made it much more difficult for professional journalists and influencers to be heard.

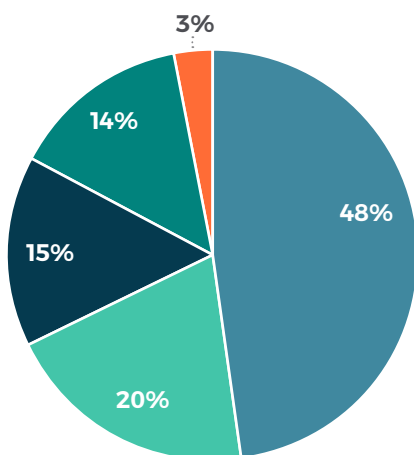
As the media contends with those realities, there are some signs many in the public have their back and are supporting journalistic institutions again. In February 2018, *The New York Times* reported more than 10 percent year-to-year revenue growth for the fourth quarter of 2017 and 7.7 per cent for the full year — a boon for an industry that had largely been in decline. According to Poynter, The Times now has more than 2.6 million digital-only subscribers, 3.6 million including print and the verticals. According to AdWeek, cable news ad revenue grew a whopping 25 per cent year over year. The

key takeaway: people see how important journalism can be with many critical stories impacting the way people think about politics, business and culture.

As tested as the industry has been, one outcome from all the turmoil is that journalists need reliable public relations partners — perhaps more than ever before. According to Cision's 2018 global State of the Media survey, in which the company surveyed 1,355 journalists from across six countries on their perception of the media and communications industries, working with trusted professionals who can provide accurate, newsworthy information is a must.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Being **accurate** is more important than being first
- Journalists are concerned about **fake news** and **trust** in the media.
- Reporters and editors still **trust the press release** the most
- PR professionals are being asked to provide **accurate, newsworthy** information.



► Here's a breakdown of this year's global respondents, by outlet:

■ PRINT (NEWSPAPER/MAGAZINE)

651 responses

■ ONLINE-ONLY NEWS OUTLET

267 responses

■ BROADCAST (TV, RADIO, PODCAST)

208 responses

■ INDIVIDUAL/PERSONAL

BLOG/FREELANCE

194 responses

■ SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM

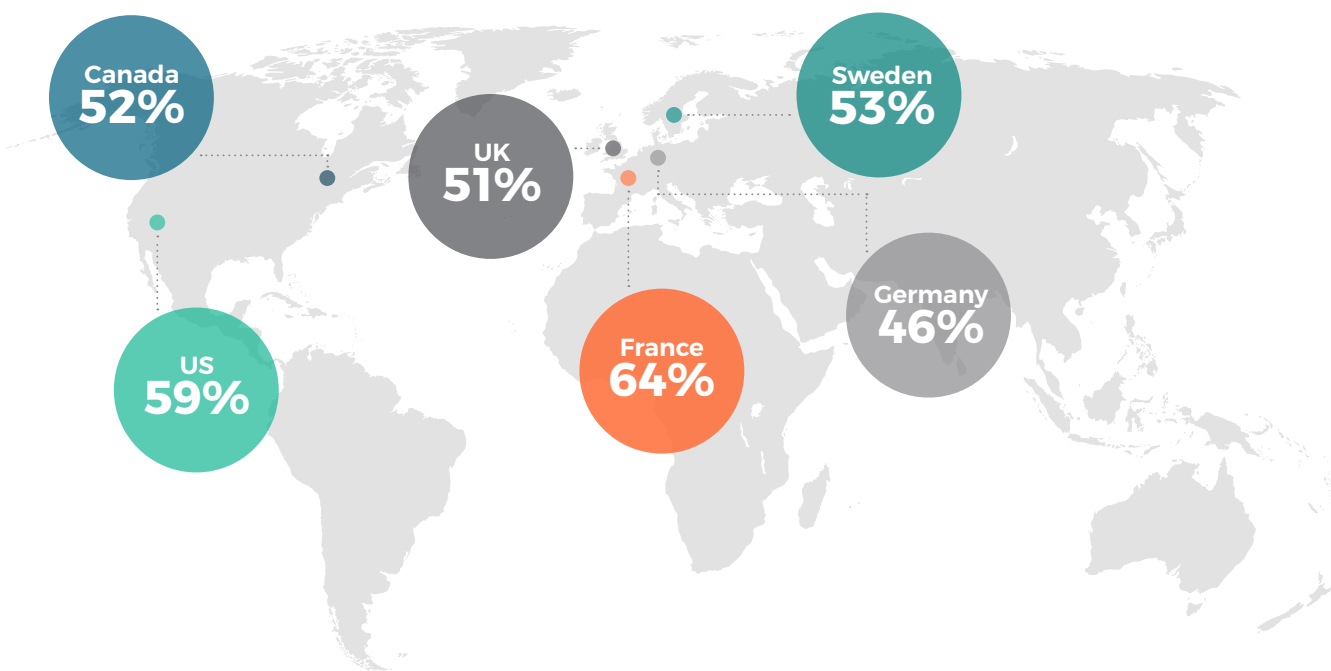
35 responses

According to three-quarters of the survey's respondents, being 100 per cent accurate in their reporting is more important than being first on a story or the promise of exclusivity. As well, 56 per cent of journalists said fake news accusations are causing audiences

to become more skeptical about the content they produce. The survey asked "what's the biggest impact that 'fake news' (defined as false content presented as real news coverage of actual events) will have on journalism?" This is how global responses varied:

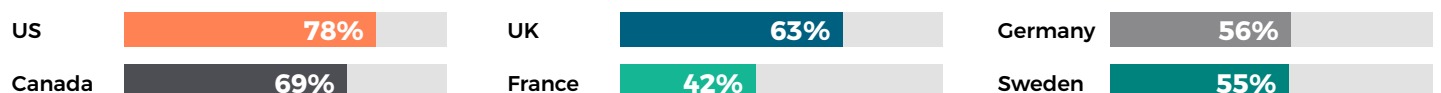
**Fake news is a big deal and for good reason: It's making people much more suspicious of all content they consume. Globally, 56 per cent of respondents said that fake news is making readers more skeptical than ever about what they read and see.**

► Here's how the above sentiment was expressed by country:



**Trust is another issue, with 71 per cent saying they think the public has lost trust in journalists. That's down from 91 per cent last year, but it's still a significant number.**

► Here's how the above sentiment was expressed by country:



Social media is also making the job of a journalist more complicated, as some worry that social networks and search engines are causing audiences to bypass traditional media.

What's the implication for brands and communications professionals? It means that being a trusted source and reliable partner is more vital now than ever. While

journalists can get story ideas from anywhere, they still say their most valuable and trusted piece of PR content is the traditional press release.

Most are happy to work with public relations professionals, provided they're giving them information that's accurate, newsworthy, and that can be used to enhance their coverage.



### **CANADA: SEEKING MORE TRUSTWORTHY SPOKESPEOPLE**

As much talk as there has been around “fake news” over the last year, it’s not as much of an issue for Canadian journalists as it is for media in other countries. When asked what’s the biggest challenge for journalism over the last 12 months, only 9.4 per cent said fake stories. The most pressing issue, with 34.5 per cent, was staffing and resources. Still, 50 per cent did say that fake news is making readers more skeptical of all content, while 44 per cent weren’t yet sure how it would impact their organization. Overall, 71 per cent of Canadian journalists think the public has lost trust in the media.

In Canada, similar to elsewhere in the world, accuracy is crucial, with 72 per cent of journalists saying that getting the story 100 per cent right is more important than being first to publish. In order to be right, journalists need trustworthy sources of information, which they’re getting in some ways, but not in others. The survey found that 52 per cent of journalists trust news releases most, but 24 per cent said the same about spokespeople. The message? Providing honest and accurate brand representatives will be key in strengthening the PR-journalist relationship.

# JOURNALISM'S BIG CHALLENGES

It's no secret the journalism industry is undergoing some profound changes. Newsrooms are either shrinking or changing the focus of their coverage. The survey data helped elucidate the scope of those changes.

Out of all the issues the industry is facing, 28 per cent said staffing and resources were the biggest challenges in journalism over the last 12 months. Social networks and search engines bypassing traditional media was a close third at 25 per cent. Ongoing conversations on fake news, blurred lines between editorial and advertising, and issues around freedom of the press rounded out the list of challenges.

The proliferation of fake news, typically created by "troll farms" and those on the extreme ends of the political spectrum, was the second most pressing challenge over the last 12 months—still a major concern for many journalists. More than half said "fake news" is making readers more skeptical about the content they read, including news produced by real reporters, while 46 per cent are still unsure of how these untrue stories will impact their organization in the future.

There may be a bright side to the fake news phenomenon: 21 per cent of respondents said that it's increasing the importance of journalistic standards, while 9 per cent said that it's improving the popularity of trusted and established media brands.

## How are journalists dealing with the industry's biggest challenges?

► Here's what journalists had to say:



"Being mindful of accuracy and attention to facts in everything we do, avoiding production techniques that might misrepresent reality in any way."

"Compiling original and creative content that is interesting to the audience. Sharing the electronic content on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Putting emphasis on human interest stories and targeting a young audience that consumes news via social media platforms."

"I continue to write news for bone fide news organizations, but I also promote my work where possible on social platforms. Having to master this piece is the biggest challenge where in the past writing news, getting it right and speedy publishing was enough."

"It's a struggle."

"Creating original content, seeking out our own stories, putting together a product people will look for on its own merits."



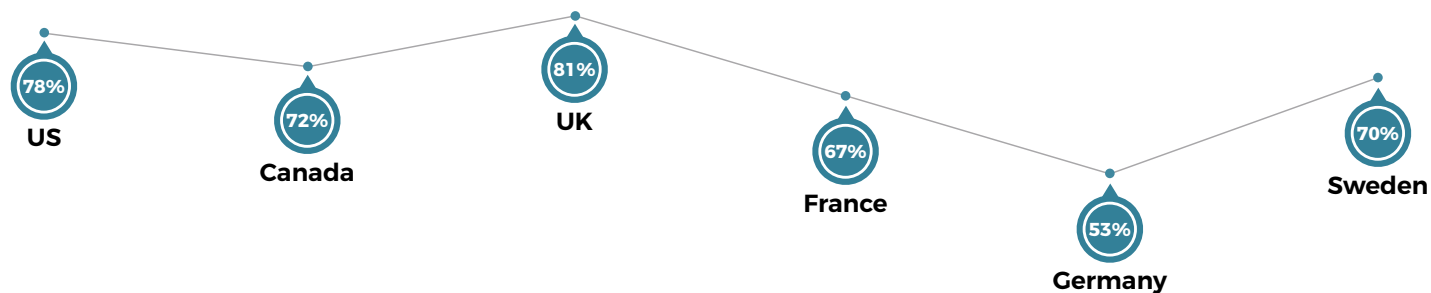
# ACCURACY FIRST

With so much attention on news media these days, being first to publish, whether on social media or their outlet's website, is no longer the priority for most journalists. Like we saw last year, ensuring that content is 100 per cent

accurate is paramount, with 75 per cent of global respondents saying getting things right is most important to their news organization. Only 10 per cent said the same about being first to publish, down from 13 per cent in 2017.

**Globally, 75 per cent of media say that ensuring content is 100 per cent accurate is the most important for their org.**

► Here's how the above sentiment was expressed by country:



Being accurate has always been important to journalists but emphasizing that aim for accuracy may help the media grow its audience. When we asked journalists if the public had lost or gained trust in the media over the last year, 71 per cent said people had lost trust, with only 5 per cent saying the opposite. While that's still a troubling number, it is down from 91 per cent in last year's survey. Why the decline? The constant attacks on the media industry have made people pay more attention to what journalists do and the value they provide. Couple that with the publication of several ground-breaking stories and more people now realize that the media does,

in fact, produce honest and important work. The public is looking to traditionally trusted sources to provide relevant and factual coverage of current events.

One issue that reiterated the importance of journalism was #MeToo and #TimesUp, movements that started after reporters broke stories on sexual harassment in Hollywood and within journalism's own ranks. We wanted to know if these movements help or hurt the perception of journalism, since many of the issues of harassment happened with media personalities. The media was split, with 36 per cent saying it strongly enforces journalism's role, 35 per cent saying it didn't make a difference, and 29 per cent saying it hurt journalism's image.

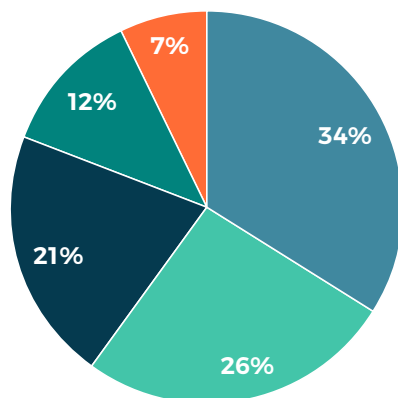


# AI AND SMART TECHNOLOGY

## Emerging Technology and Social Media Trends

### Social Algorithm Updates

Social media has been a major media disruptor for years, but it's still something many journalists grapple with as part of their day-to-day duties. When asked what new technology will change the way journalists work the most, 34 per cent said new social media algorithms. Specifically, they called out Facebook's recent news feed and algorithm updates, saying they will have the biggest impact on their jobs. More than a quarter said that better and cheaper video production technology would influence their work, while 21 per cent think artificial intelligence and machine learning improve the way they analyze traffic and performance data and predict readership trends.



### Journalists told us what technology they think will change the way they work the most.

- **UPDATED SOCIAL MEDIA ALGORITHMS**  
(e.g. Facebook's updates)
- **BETTER AND CHEAPER VIDEO PRODUCTION TECHNOLOGY** (drones, cameras, etc.)
- **AI/MACHINE LEARNING ON THE BACK END**  
(i.e., to analyze traffic/content performance and predict trends in readership/viewership)

- **AI/MACHINE LEARNING ON THE FRONT END** (i.e., to automate the creation of articles and videos using interview footage, etc.)
- **VOICE RECOGNITION/ACTIVATED TECHNOLOGY AND ASSISTANTS**



When asked what new technology will change the way journalists work the most, 34 per cent said new social media algorithms.

# THE CONTINUED NEED FOR PR

The journalism industry may be experiencing plenty of change, but the State of the Media survey found that its dependence on public relations professionals hasn't wavered. We asked respondents whether their relationships with PR professionals are more or less valuable today. In response, 70 per cent said their relationships remained neutral, while 20 per cent said it's more valuable.

When it comes to what journalists want from their PR contacts, 63 per cent said news announcements and press releases, indicating that most reporters want to continue interacting with their PR professionals in the same way they have been historically. However, 22 per cent reported that original research on trends and market data was also important to them, offering a new opportunity for PR and comms pros to be a source.

Journalists also trust press releases the most, with 44 per cent saying that it's their most trustworthy source of brand-related information. Only 30 per cent said the same about a company spokesperson – clearly there is work to

be done when it comes to the spokespeople PR professionals provide – while 20 per cent said they trust the company's website most. Despite how much time journalists spend on social media, just three per cent said they trust blog and social media channels.

▶ **Press releases are the #1 most valuable content**

**63%**

When it comes to what journalists want from their PR contacts, 63 per cent said news announcements and press releases

▶ **Press releases are the #1 most trusted brand source**

**44%**

Journalists also trust press releases the most, with 44 per cent saying that it's their most trustworthy source of brand-related information

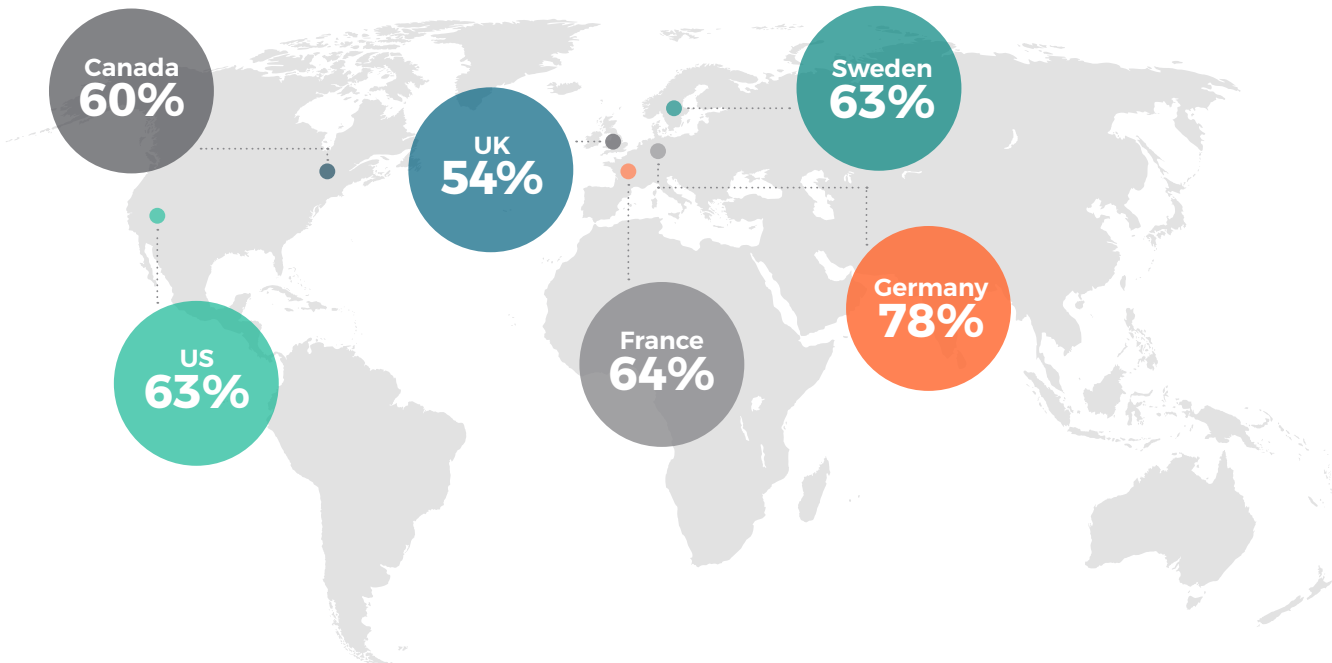
## IN PRESS RELEASES WE TRUST

Journalists continue to love the press release. For three years in a row, media professionals have ranked press releases and news announcements as the most valuable type content they receive from their PR contacts. They've also once again chosen the press release as their most trusted brand source. This is nearly universal, with journalists from around the world citing press releases as their most trusted source of company information.





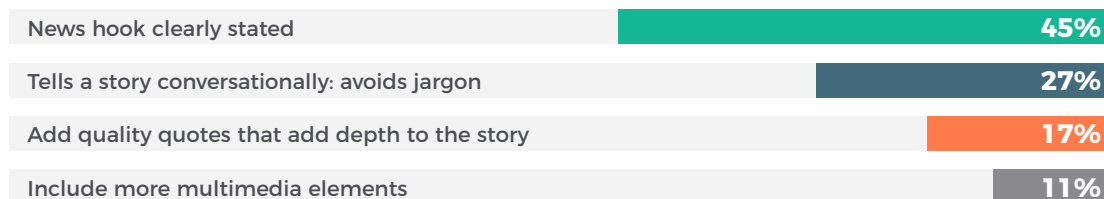
► The percentage of journalists from each country surveyed who said press releases were tops:



► Here's what journalists want to see from PR pros

1. Press releases
2. Original research reports
3. Follow-up press releases
4. Content marketing/advocacy releases
5. Video clips/b-roll/livestream
6. Blog posts

► How to make a press release more effective (global numbers):



With journalists able to get news from a variety of sources these days, PR professionals can't rest on their laurels. If they don't give the media

what they want, journalists could quickly turn against the release and find another way to get the information they need.

# BUILDING TRUST

Given the low levels of trust in media today, and concerns about how fake news might impact the industry going forward, being a trustworthy partner to journalists is paramount. But how can brands help build up that trust? One place to start is by providing media professionals relevant and honest research and information via press releases, story pitches and by arming brand spokespeople, including CEOs, with real and interesting stories to tell.

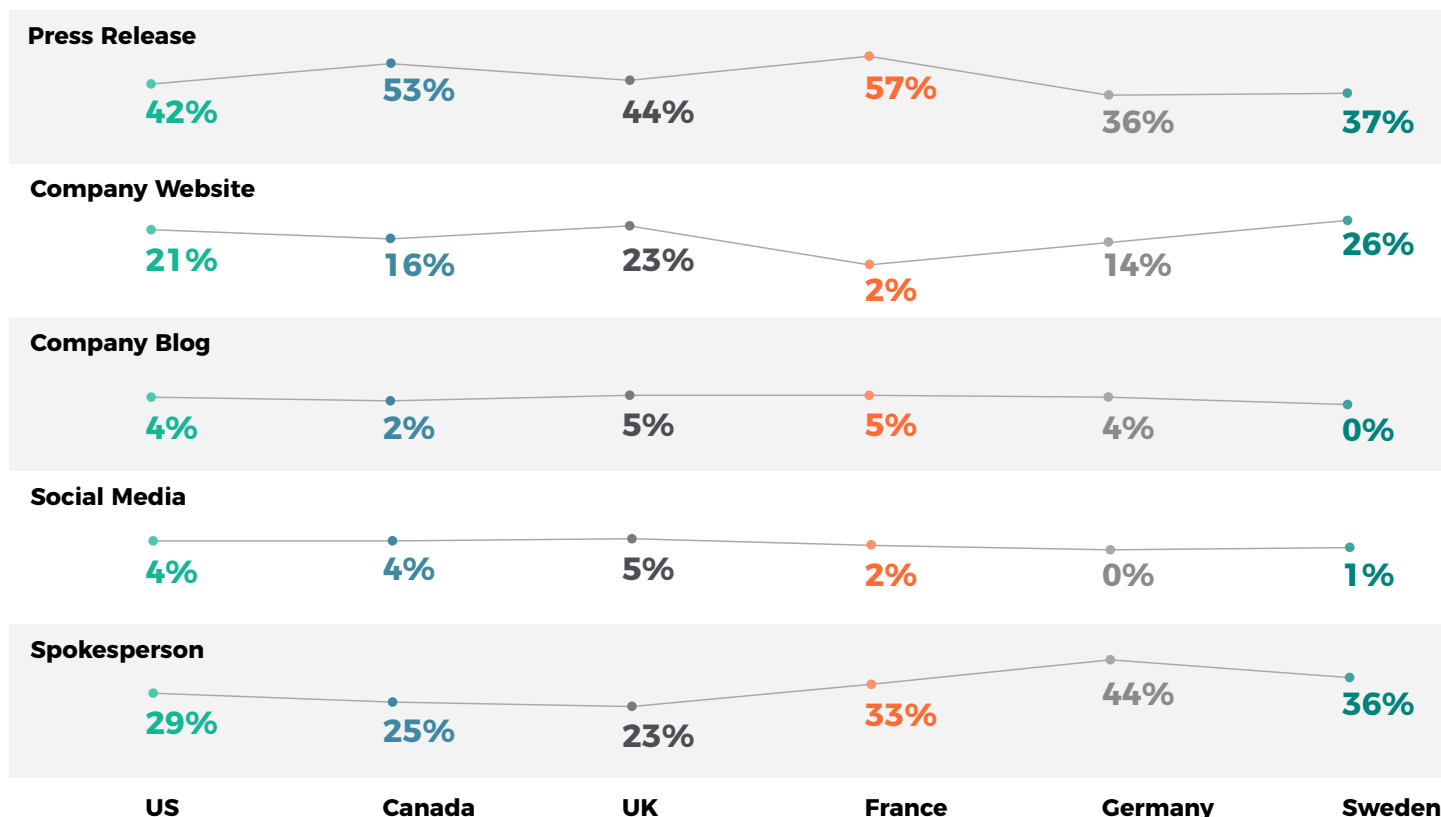
Continuing to make earned media a priority is still important, too. Using owned channels, like a website or company blog, can provide some

context and useful information, but it's not useful for reporting a story. In fact, only three per cent of global respondents said that a company blog is a trustworthy source of brand information for their stories. Getting someone to speak to a journalist directly, versus just pointing them to your site, is still important today.

But whatever your media outreach plan involves – whether it's a blog post, a press release or a CEO giving an interview– PR pros must put forward material that's not marketing jargon, that can explain clearly how something works, and why it's relevant to journalists.

Even with all the changes in media formats (social explosion, sites, blogs, etc.) the tried and true press release still reigns, followed closely by company spokespeople. It seems "the more things change, the more they stay the same". The data shows that the media continues to fall back on traditional, trusted sources of brand content.

► Here's how media ranked different earned and owned channels for trustworthiness:



# FIND THE HOOK

If there's one thing that PR professionals can do to help journalists do their jobs better, it's ensure that any press releases they do send out have a clearly stated news hook. That was something 45 per cent of respondents said when asked how press releases can be more efficient. Also, write conversationally – 27 per cent indicated that they dislike press releases that feel templated and include jargon. More quotes and multimedia elements would help, too.

As strong as the PR-journalist rapport may be, there are ways to improve the relationship. According to the survey, 28 per cent of respondents felt that PR professionals can do a better job of researching and understanding journalists and their outlets before pitching, while 24 per cent said they'd like pitches to be more tailored to their beat. Another 27 per cent noted that PR professionals should have data and expert sources ready to go when reporters need them. Only 15 per cent said that their number one request from PR professionals was less spam.

Journalism is dealing with several challenges these days, but the PR

industry can help news outlets navigate these choppy waters. No matter what happens in the industry, eye-catching, fact-based storytelling is still paramount. The PR professionals who can help reporters and editors with their work – by providing accurate, information-rich press releases, and by giving journalists access to sources – will be the ones who will succeed the most.



Global respondents rated their PR professionals at **3.38** out of 5 stars, between neutral and satisfied.

## Building Better Relationships With The Media:

► **Here is the #1 thing you must do when working with the media:**

- 1. Research/understand my media outlet**
- 2. Provide me with data and expert sources when I need them**
- 3. Tailor the pitch to suit my beat(s)/coverage**
- 4. Stop spamming me**
- 5. Include multimedia assets with your pitch**

### MEDIA TIP:

For the third year in a row, journalists ask that you to research them, understand who they are and what they cover before pitching them, ranking this their top request of PR pros. They also want brands to provide original data and expert sources in a timely manner. Have a solid PR pitching and press release strategy, along with a stable of spokespeople ready upon request is a good best practice.



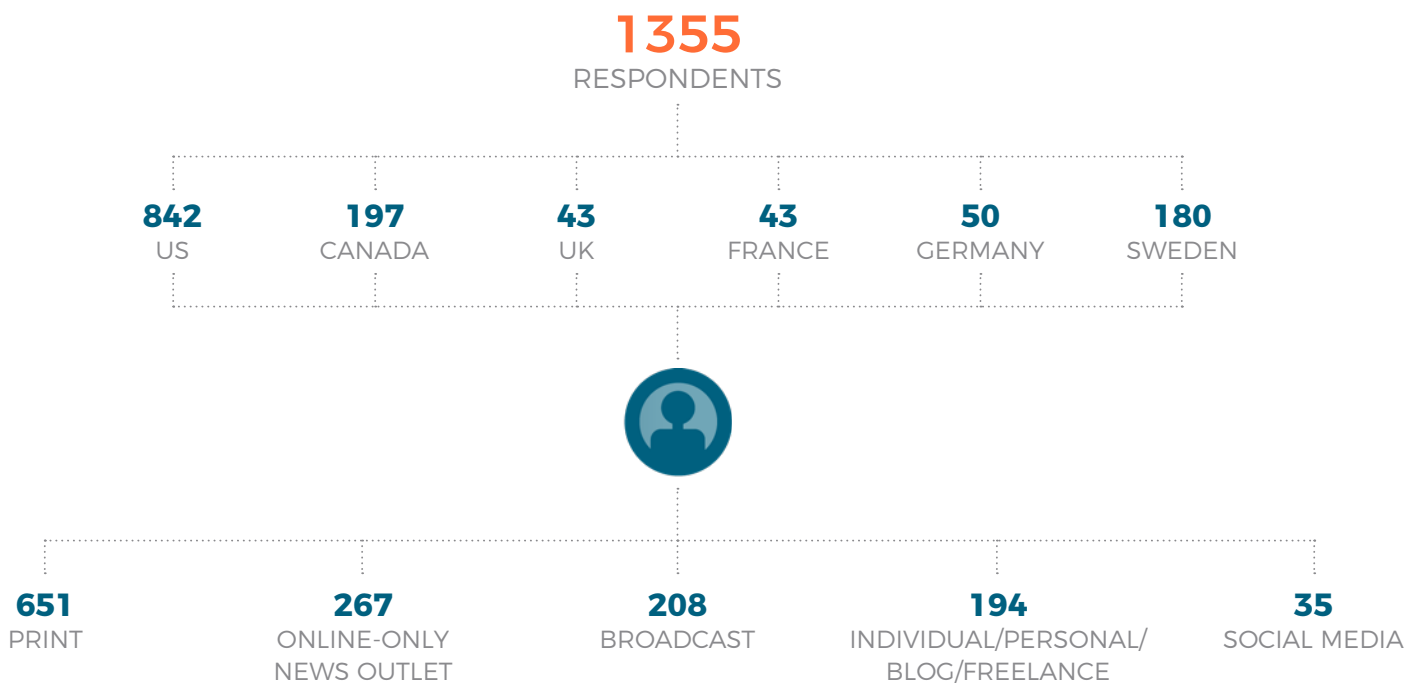
Research journalists and understand who they are before pitching them.

## 2018 CISION STATE OF THE MEDIA METHODOLOGY

Cision conducted its 2018 State of the Media Survey between February 1st and February 28th of this year. Surveys were emailed to Cision Media Database members, and are vetted by the company's media research team to verify their positions as media professionals, influencers and bloggers. The survey was also available to media professionals in the PR Newswire for Journalists database.

This year's survey collected 1,355 total responses from across the media spectrum. 842 respondents were from the

U.S., 197 were from Canada, 43 from the UK, 43 from France, 50 from Germany and 180 from Sweden. Globally, 651 are in print (newspaper/magazine), 208 work in broadcast (TV/radio/podcast), 267 work for an online-only news outlet, 194 identified as individuals/personal bloggers/freelancers, and 35 work for a social media platform. The survey language was translated and localized for each country and market and then the results were tallied together to form this global report.





## ABOUT CISION

Cision Ltd. (NYSE: CISN) is a leading global provider of earned media software and services to public relations and marketing communications professionals. Cision® software allows users to identify and engage with key influencers, craft and distribute meaningful stories, and measure the business impact. Cision has over 4,000 employees with offices in 15 countries throughout the Americas, EMEA, and APAC. Learn how to communicate like never before with the **Cision Communications Cloud®**.

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