


Media Survey 2010

Given the changing landscape, journalists are expanding the ways in which they interact with sources and PR professionals



PR Newswire

United Business Media



Added responsibility and greater adoption of social media for research and sourcing are now the norm for journalists, finds the 2010 *PRWeek/PR Newswire Media Survey*. **By Erica Morris**

News

A few years ago, subscribers to *Women's Wear Daily* (WWD) had to wait to read about various fashion events and runway shows. Now they receive real-time updates on behind-the-scenes news via Twitter posts and Facebook messages, says Cate Corcoran, technology editor at *WWD*.

"Our journalists are able to keep our readers in touch with what's going on in the industry, and they can do that in a much quicker fashion than they could just a few years ago," she says.

As the effects of the recession and the shifting media landscape continue to put an emphasis on producing more, journalists are increasingly incorporating social media into their work. Thirty-seven percent of traditional journalists report being asked to contribute to Twitter and 39% contribute to a blog as part of their expected and expanded duties, according to the 2010 *PRWeek/PR Newswire Media Survey*.

The survey polled 1,300 US journalists working for newspapers, magazines, online news sites, TV, radio, wire services, and blogs. For the first time this year, the survey also polled 1,385 US PR practitioners to get their take on how the shift in the media landscape is affecting their jobs and interaction with journalists.

"Across the board... you can see a change in journalists' behavior," says Sarah Skerik, VP of distribution services at PR Newswire (PRN). "Journalists are doing more with less. They seem to be acting more aggressively about finding their stories, digging a bit deeper for story angles."

Journalists are using social networks to help find those story ideas, with 24% reporting they consider sites like



“THERE’S MORE OF A BLURRING BETWEEN THE PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL WITH SOCIAL MEDIA”

Cate Corcoran, *Women’s Wear Daily*

update

Facebook and Twitter an important way to connect with experts, an increase from 13% in 2009. In addition, 46% of journalists say they sometimes or always use blogs for research purposes; 33% report using social networks in their research, versus 24% in 2009.

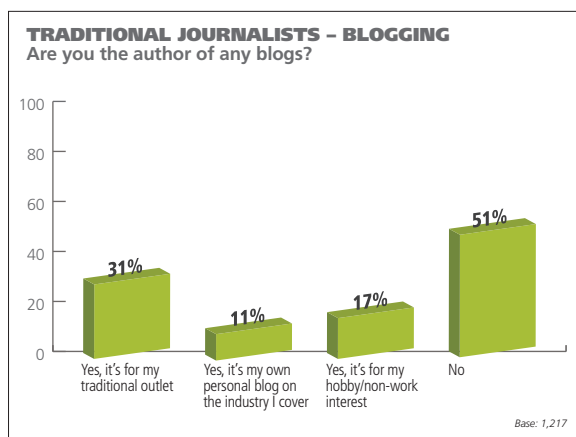
“It’s a digital age, and we’re looking for the fastest, most efficient way to reach out to other people in the industry,” says Eric Berger, science blogger for the *Houston Chronicle*. “Obviously, these types of outlets provide that efficiency. Just a few seconds online can provide a list of contact information for someone you may be trying to reach, and it’s a time saver. That’s important in an environment where people feel like they have less time.”

Twitter posts are also acting as news coverage, with reporters posting updates to augment more detailed stories that will be published at a later date, Corcoran says.

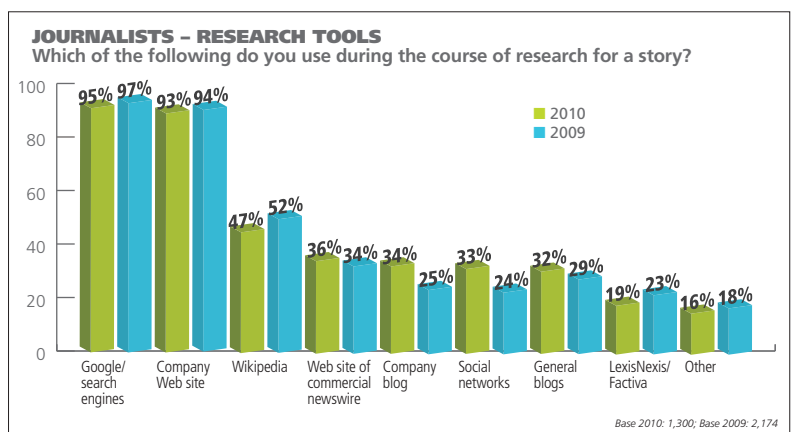
“In covering parties or fashion events, our reporters will use Twitter to talk about what’s going on, and that may coincide with a story that might take a day to write,” she adds. “There’s definitely more of a blurring between the professional and personal with social media than there was before.”

That prevalence in social media has impacted how media professionals are interacting with the PR industry. Overall, 43% of journalists have been pitched through social networks, compared to 31% in 2009.

“Coverage oftentimes comes from building a relationship with a journalist, and it’s becoming more frequent in the industry to establish those relationships through social media,” says Amy Prenner, founder of the LA-based Prenner Group. “I was recently trying to get coverage for



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an event and I went on Facebook to contact someone from a local news station. I immediately got a response from her. If I'm going to have that sort of fast feedback, I'm going to continue using this outlet."

According to the survey, 62% of PR professionals follow individual journalists and media outlets via social networks.

"I use Twitter to keep in contact with journalists I've worked with in the past and I have a relationship with," says Beth Schechner, media relations manager for software company Elementool. "There's a lot of emphasis on creating those social media connections in the day-to-day."

The prevalence of blogs

Overall, 59% of traditional journalists are the author of a blog, whether personal or professional, and 31% are writing a blog for their traditional outlet, an increase from 28% in 2009.

"We're seeing journalists from the print world enter the blogging world, and it's really because of a public demand," says Berger. "Readers want content in a number of ways and blogs give a personal voice to a topic. It's more informal. In a lot of ways, it creates more of a relationship between blogger and audience. But readers still want traditional news, so we're seeing a lot of reporters take on both."

"Blogging is definitely a large focus for many journalists," says Elizabeth Hamel, a contributing columnist and blogger for the *Chicago Sun-Times*. "We're seeing reporters using blogs to post news as it happens, which can take more time when you're writing a traditional piece. And we're seeing journalists use blogs as a way to supplement their work. Blogs are a good place to add content that supports an outside story, but may not be appropriate within that actual piece."

And the way bloggers view themselves is changing. According to the survey, 52% identify themselves as journalists, up from the 37% that did so in 2009.

With so much activity in the blogosphere, 44% of PR pros are choosing to circumvent traditional journalists for certain stories. The survey shows that 17% of respondents are pitching to traditional media outlets with less

frequency; 66% are targeting bloggers more than before; and 45% are going directly to consumers more often.

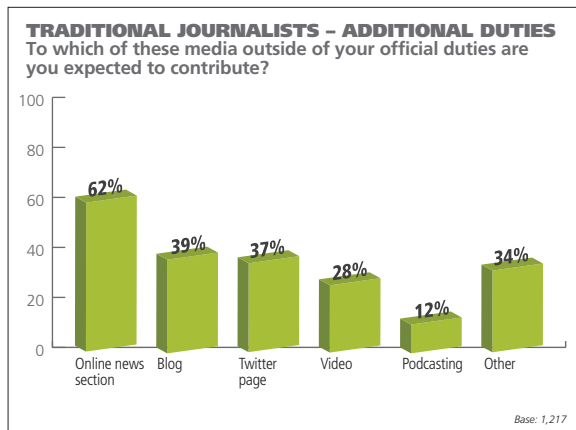
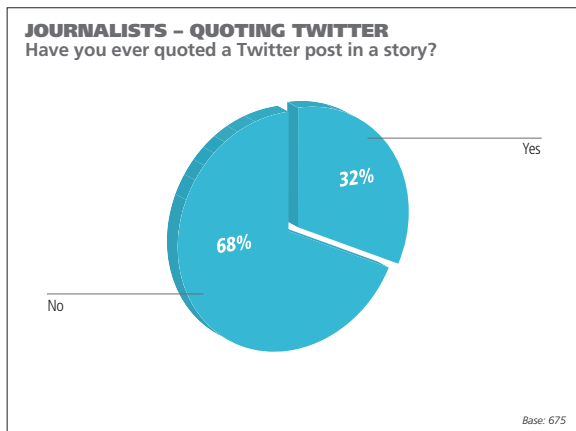
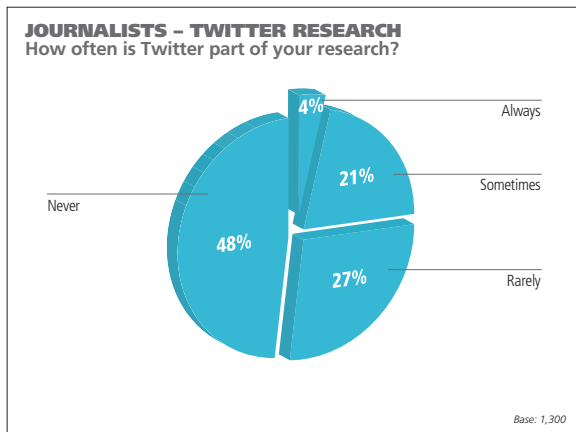
As far as the type of stories being targeted to bloggers rather than traditional journalists, 39% cite new product announcements, 37% look to bloggers for product reviews.

Schechner says blogs are an ideal place to promote product launches due to their niche-market feel. She says her team will sometimes circumvent traditional media altogether for certain product launches.

"A lot more of our customers are participating in blogs than even a year ago, and we've found that outreach to bloggers and exposure on blogs results in an overwhelming response from our customers," Schechner says. "Bloggers tend to be hitting our users right where they read."

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44%
of PR pros are circumventing traditional journalists for certain stories



Journalist respondents

Type of outlet: Of the respondents, **34%** work for a newspaper; **32%** for a print magazine; **13%** for an online magazine/news site; **8%** for a radio station; **6%** for a blog; **5%** for a TV news station; and **1%** for a wire service

Target audience: The majority of respondents, **59%**, characterize their audience as consumer; **30%** describe it as b-to-b or trade; and **11%** as other

Experience and age: The median number of years of experience for respondents is **11.7** years; the median age is **42.9**



The Canadian perspective

This year's media survey also polled 268 Canadian journalists and 285 Canadian PR practitioners. It was sponsored by CNW Group, part of PR Newswire's international network. The results show that Canadian journalists are also heavily using social media tools in their work: 30% of them are expected to blog on behalf of their outlet and 30% are expected to maintain a presence on Twitter. In addition, 20% agree that social networks are an important place to find experts.

By the numbers: Canadian PR pros

32% circumvent traditional media for new product announcements

29% circumvent traditional media for product reviews

48% are pitching bloggers more than in the past

13% are pitching traditional media less than in the past

David Milliken, SVP at CNW Group, expects these numbers to rise in the coming years.

"What I'm seeing is a very active social media sphere among Canadian journalists, with several of our major news outlets – like the *Ottawa Citizen* and the *Montreal Gazette* – offering dozens of blogs," he says. "With the evolving market situation, many journalists just coming out of school understand they can't be just one type of journalist. They're coming out ready to work in multimedia facets, blogging and uploading videos."

Blogs are also an important channel for Canadian PR professionals; 24% say they sometimes circumvent traditional media in their work.

Andrea Craig, senior consultant at Hill & Knowlton in Canada, notes that practitioners are more likely to go straight to the bloggers for specific stories.

"I find some items are more appropriate for the blogosphere, for example a product launch with a digital element," she says. "For those types of stories, I may be more likely to directly reach out to a blogger instead of a traditional journalist. It's a case-by-case basis, but this has become much more common than a year ago."

Meanwhile, 35% of Canadian journalists say their workload has stayed the same since last year, while 58% say their workload has increased in the past year.

John Ross, anchorman at Toronto radio station 680 News, says he has noticed an uptick in the amount of work Canadian journalists are assigned, with reporters and editors taking on more stories and contributing more multimedia elements.

"Even just looking at the last few years, journalists are busier," he notes. "There's more pressure now to come up with supporting content, like videos and photos, and to contribute to outlets outside traditional media, like a blog or Twitter feed."

Anton Koschany, executive producer at W5 CTV, says this heightened workload has changed the way journalists interact with PR pros, adding he's seen more of an exchange between the two sides than in years past. According to the survey, 11% of Canadian journalists say they proactively reach out to PR professionals more now, while 39% of PR professionals report more proactive inquiries from journalists.

"Because there are so many elements to journalism now, someone in PR is a source that can provide contacts and information, especially photographs, in a timely manner," he explains. "That's an attractive quality." ●

This survey was conducted by CA Walker. E-mail invites were sent to 19,839 media professionals and 268 completed the survey. E-mail invites were also sent to 18,976 PR professionals and 285 completed the survey.

The survey was completed online from January 11-19. Results are not weighed and are statistically tested at a confidence level of 90%.

By the numbers: Canadian journalists

32% use blogs always or sometimes in their research

22% use Twitter always or sometimes in their research

36% have been pitched via social network

80% have been pitched via Facebook

35% have been pitched via Twitter

“Blogs are a perfect place to talk about new products because a lot of the people behind them are very passionate about the topic they’re covering and they’ve cultivated audiences that trust their opinions and are equally as passionate about the topic,” the *Houston Chronicle’s* Berger says. “You get writers here that really know the industry they’re covering and can go beyond just reporting the facts about a product. They can give background information, comparisons to other products, and advice on how to best use the product.”

Journalists are also using blogs in their research, with 45% saying they’ve quoted a blog in an article. However, when researching a specific company, 90% of journalists are still acquiring information through the company’s Web site; 24% are using general blogs, and 23% are going to the company’s blog to get information on that specific business.

For general story research, 34% say they use company blogs, up from 25% last year. However, 51% report they do not find company blogs useful, pointing to a possible disconnect in how businesses are presenting information.

“Are journalists going outside a company’s site because their blog isn’t as up to date as it could be?” Skerik asks. “If so, this can be a PR opportunity.”

“A company blog can be a jumping-off point for basic information, but you’ll want to go to a source that might be more objective,” says Peter Bernard, news anchor for WFLA in Tampa. “You don’t want to just take what a company is saying about itself as a reflection of what the whole truth is. This is where going to sources like analysts and experts comes in.”

The social side of pitching

According to the survey, 43% of PR practitioners report using social networks to pitch the media, with 76% using Twitter and 49% using Facebook.

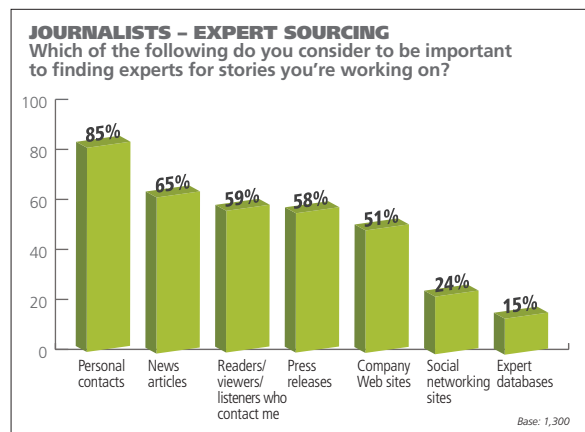
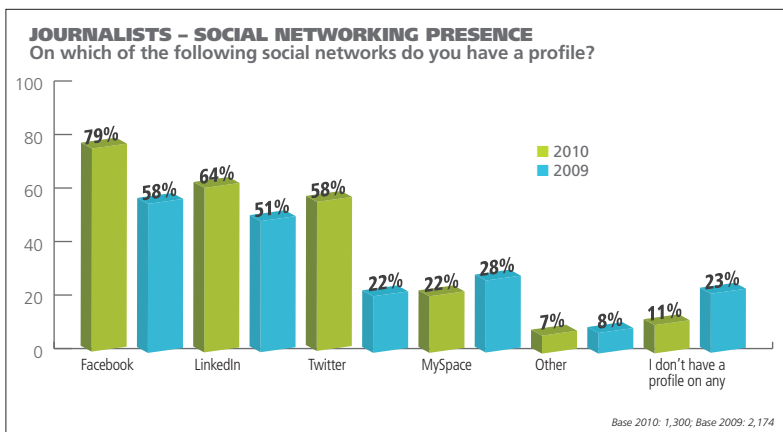
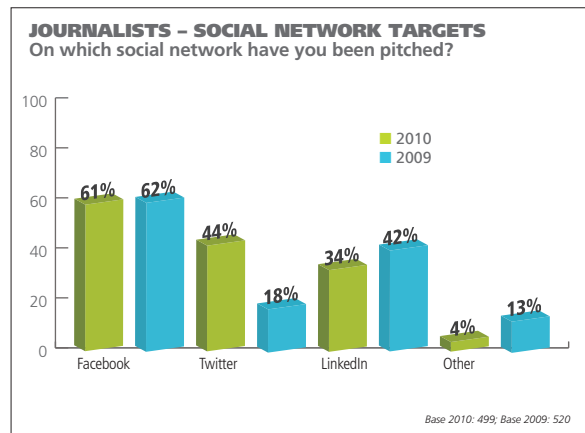
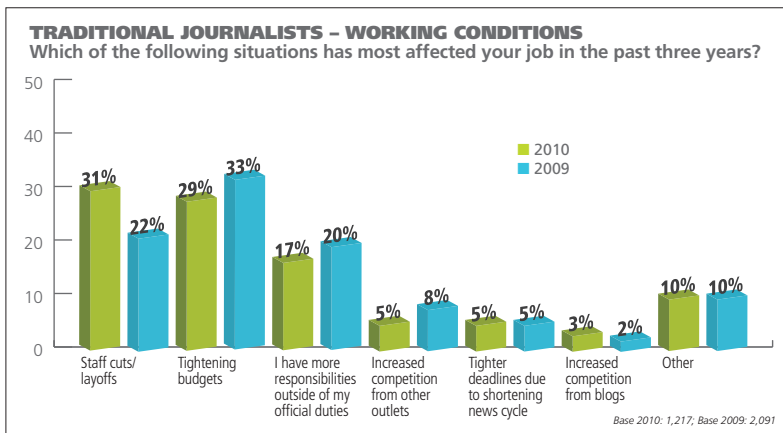
This data shows a strong PR-journalist connection: 61% of journalists that have been pitched via social network have received pitches via Facebook, while 44% have received Twitter pitches. However, the microblogging site’s popularity is on the rise as a pitching tool, as only 18% of journalists were getting Twitter pitches a year ago.

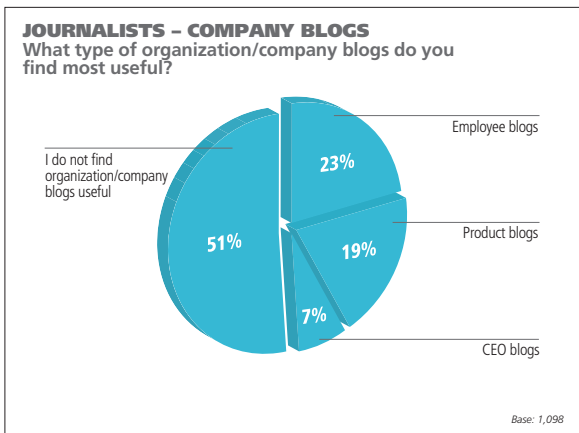
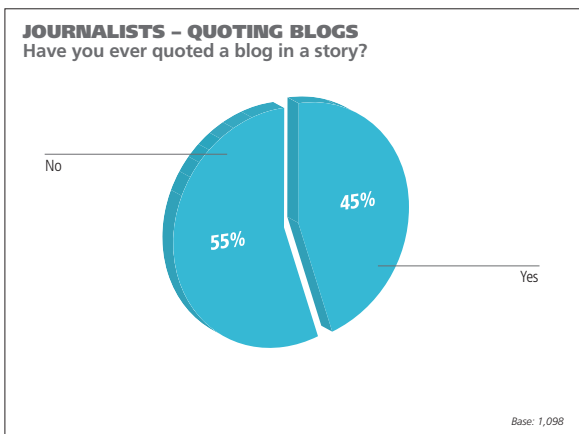
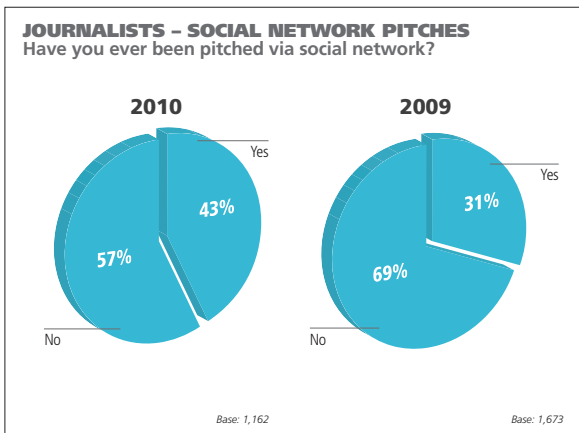
However, while the two sides can agree on using social networks for pitching, they’re not in agreement on the success rate for the exchange of ideas: 61% of journalists say unsolicited pitches result in a story only “1% to 20%” of the time. And 44% say only “0 to 25%” of the pitches they receive are related to what they cover. That figure contrasts with what those in the PR industry are saying: 47% of PR pros report “75% to 100%” of their pitches are personalized and on target.

“It’s interesting that there’s such a divide,” Skerik says. “Sometimes we see journalists wanting to keep PR pros at arms length in the public eye, but behind closed doors we know there is more of an exchange.”

Vince Guerrieri, assistant editor and reporter for *The News Messenger/Port Clinton News Herald* in Ohio, says he’s noticed a change in how PR pros and press members are interacting. He says he sees journalists reaching out to PR pros more in the past few years, a trend he attributes to tight deadlines and a need to connect and create stories quickly. That trend falls in line with what PR pros are seeing, as 34% report more pro-

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“Multimedia is a growing trend for PR pros and it’s in direct correlation with what journalists are doing in their work,” says Adam Leiter, associate VP at The Star Group Public Relations. “Journalists are uploading videos, they’re uploading photos, they’re posting URL links in their blogs, and adding this content to a traditional press release can make the journalist’s job easier.”

“High resolution photos or videos backing up a story can make a journalist’s work easier,” adds Guerrieri. “These are things that we may end up having to look for ourselves, so if a PR person can provide it up front, it takes some of the work off our hands.”

The digital world is also playing into how respondents measure success. Fifty-three percent of journalists consider links from other media sources and blogs an important way to measure success, up from 47% in 2009. However, only 49% view comments from readers online as a measure of success, a decrease from 52% last year.

“We certainly do look to traffic primarily to measure success,” Corcoran says. “We’re looking at how many times a page is viewed, how often it’s being e-mailed around. And if there’s a certain topic that’s getting e-mailed often enough, we’ll increase coverage in that area.”

Increasing workload

Journalists report seeing their workload go up, with 58% saying the number of stories they file each day has increased over past years. Overall, 72% report a higher workload than last year. Contributing to that workload are a variety of duties, including an online news section (62%), video (28%), and podcasting (12%).

“There’s no question that journalists are doing more work than before,” Guerrieri says. “Reporters are being asked to submit content in a num-

34%
of journalists say pitches that incorporate multimedia help them understand a story better



“READERS WANT CONTENT IN A NUMBER OF WAYS AND BLOGS GIVE A PERSONAL VOICE TO A TOPIC”

Eric Berger, *Houston Chronicle*

active inquiries from journalists, while 13% of journalists confess to proactively reaching out to PR pros more.

According to the survey, 84% of journalists consider e-mail the best way to receive story pitches, up 3% from last year. Only 4% report the phone to be the best way to do so.

Among PR pros, 74% still find e-mail pitches to be the most effective way of communicating with journalists.

“We probably saw phone go down and e-mail go up as people got busier. You can go through 50 e-mails much quicker than 50 phone messages,” Skerik says. “A savvy PR pro should think, ‘How do I make this person’s life easier?’”

This year, 34% of journalists say pitches incorporating multimedia elements help them better understand a story, and 25% say they use multimedia items from a pitch on their outlet’s Web site.

ber of formats. If they traditionally work in print, maybe they’re being asked to also create videos and submit content for the Web. If they’re traditionally in broadcast, maybe they’re now also writing blog posts.”

Guerrieri says the workload increase is also due to lingering effects of the recession. “There are less people doing more work,” he adds.

Victoria Munt Rogers, publisher for Texas-based *Gulfscapes*, says she’s noticed a growing trend of reporters weighed down by their workload, attributing the extra pressure on job cuts and an added emphasis on generating content for both traditional and Web media.

“I think reporters are getting overwhelmed,” she says. “People are required to do so much now. Writers are working overtime to submit as much content as they can.”

“It’s a tough economy and everyone has concerns,” Corcoran adds. “Job cuts and budgets have been a major source of worry over the past year for many journalists. Everyone feels that pressure.”

In fact, 31% of journalists say staff cuts and layoffs are the situation that has most affected their jobs in the past three years, up from 22% in 2009. Tightening budgets are still a concern for 29% of journalists, but not as much as it was in 2009, when 33% of respondents reported it as their major concern.

A positive outlook

“Staff and budget cuts are both a concern, but I think it’s getting better,” says Guerrieri. “We’re not seeing as much of a panic in the industry as we were when the economic crash first hit. I expect we’ll see people become even more confident in their workplace in the coming year.”

“It feels like journalists are becoming more comfortable in their organizations, which makes me think we’re seeing stabilization as traditional media recovers from its shakeup,” Skerik says. “PR pros that are able to adapt are seeing success, mainly by using social media as an intelligent way to pitch.”

Overall, journalists are more optimistic about the future. Though 57% anticipate a decline in print circulation with an in-



“YOU DON’T WANT TO JUST TAKE WHAT A COMPANY IS SAYING AS A REFLECTION OF THE WHOLE TRUTH”

Peter Bernard, WFLA

creased focus on the Web over the next three years, that figure is down from 62% last year. In 2009, 42% predicted a reduction in staff in the future, while only 28% anticipate layoffs this year. And 26% believe the next three years will see staff shifts from print to online, down 10% from 2009.

“The economy has been tough, but there’s definitely a general feeling that things are getting better,” Rogers says. “We’re adapting and learning how to work in this changing medium. As people become more confident in how to handle the changes, we’ll see that reflected in their outlook.” ●

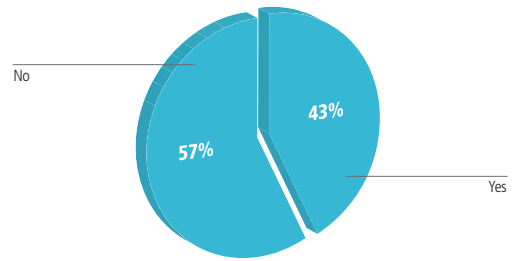
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PR PRACTITIONERS – SOCIAL NETWORK PITCHES

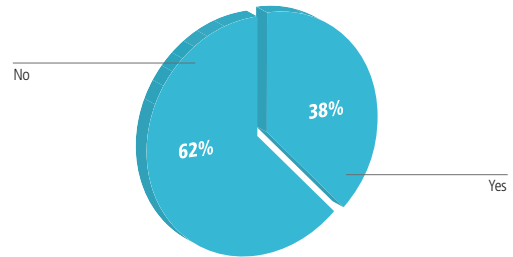
Have you ever pitched a journalist via a social network?



Base: 1,385

PR PRACTITIONERS – AD/EDIT DIVIDE

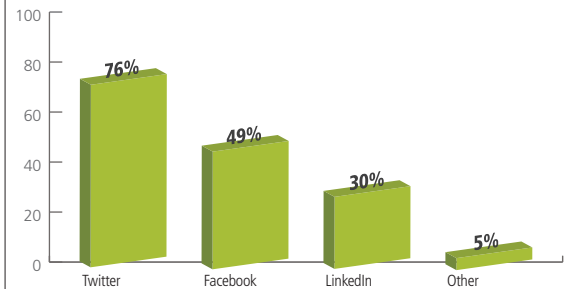
In the past year, have you “paid for play” (i.e., gotten editorial coverage as a result of purchasing advertising)?



Base: 1,385

PR PRACTITIONERS – SOCIAL NETWORK TARGETS

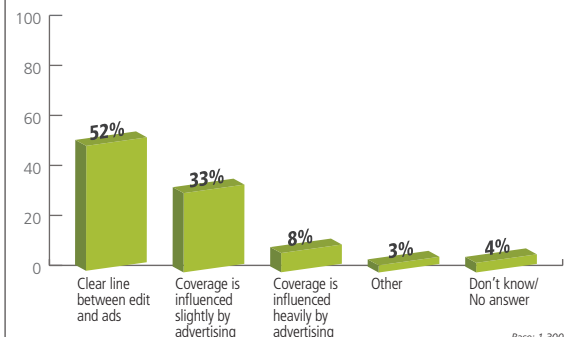
Which social network have you used to pitch a journalist?



Base: 589

JOURNALISTS – AD/EDIT DIVIDE

Which of the following best describes the relationship between editorial and advertising at your outlet?



Base: 1,300