

2024

**State of the Press
Release Report**

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Executive Summary

In many ways, the world looks very different than it did when we published the most recent State of the Press Release Report in 2021. The COVID-19 pandemic is largely in the rearview mirror, but the resulting extended lockdowns have permanently altered how many individuals work. Due to the decline of professional in-person interactions, the need for brands to communicate with their audiences across multiple channels is more important than ever.

In this year's State of the Media Report, journalists reported that "maintaining credibility as a trusted news source" was their top challenge. Because press releases are sent directly from brands and vetted by trusted distribution partners, they provide an antidote to the misinformation spread on an increasing number of online channels, helping both journalists and comms practitioners maintain trust and credibility with their audience in an ever-changing world.

While some PR and comms professionals' habits—such as sending the same number of press releases—remain unchanged, new technological advances—most notably, artificial intelligence—promise to disrupt how

they create content in the future. Right now, early adopters and curious looky-loos are experimenting with generative AI's capabilities. However, if the prognosticators are correct, in the near future, the use of gen AI will become as ubiquitous as using spell check in content creation.

For this year's report, we asked comms pros how they are currently using gen AI to help them craft press release content. The answers reveal a willingness among some PR practitioners to test multiple use cases for AI that help streamline the press release creation process.

We also asked questions about comms professionals' use of the press release itself, and the responses spoke to its strong resiliency and stability as a PR tool. We also dug into how comms professionals are repurposing their content across multiple channels and which channels they are using to do so.

Finally, throughout the report, we've included proprietary data around press release trends, factors that influence page views on prnewswire.com and more. Our goal in sharing this information is to empower PR and comms professionals to craft releases designed to maximize engagement.

How PR and Comms Professionals are Using Press Releases in 2024

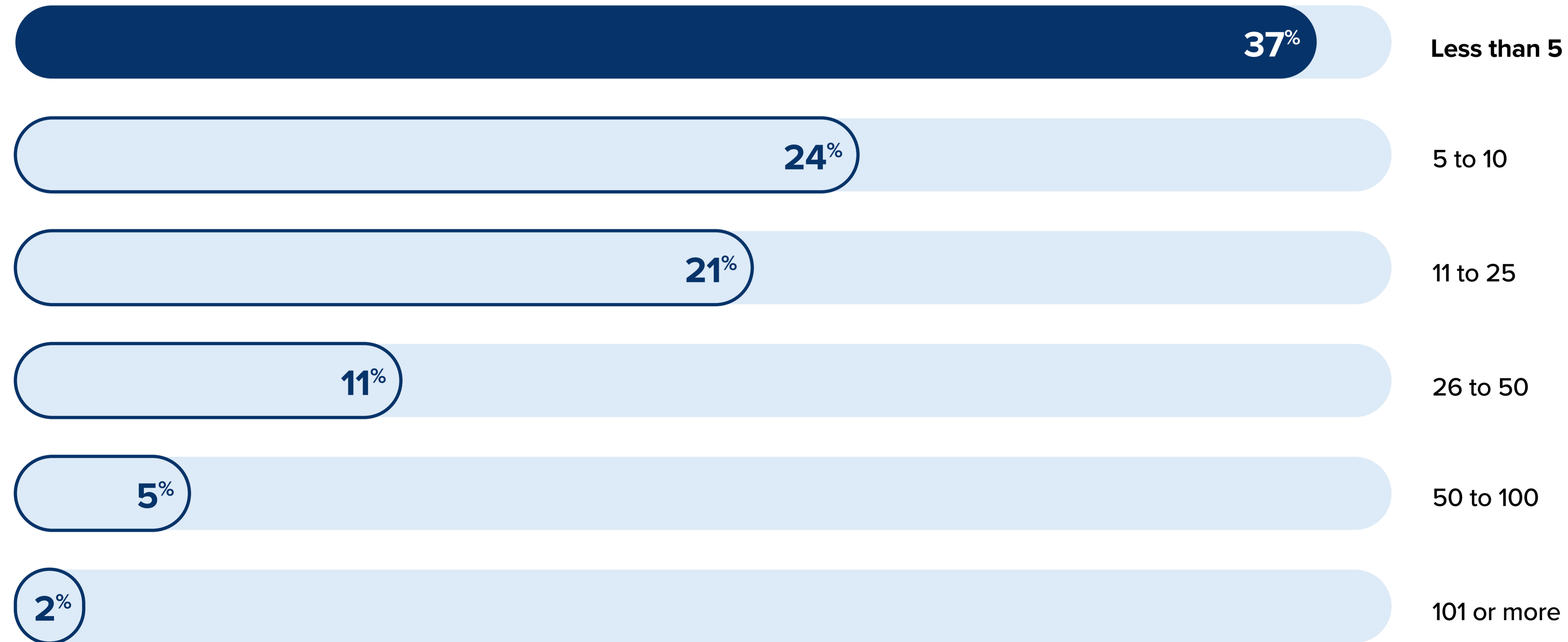
What was clear from our survey data is that the press release remains the gold standard of communications content for most PR professionals. The vast majority of respondents are planning to send either the same number or more releases on behalf of their brands in the coming year. These comms pros might have learned from our State of the Media report that the majority of journalists prefer receiving press releases, too. This year, the report uncovered:

- **74% of journalists** said that they want news announcements / press releases from PR professionals.
- **68% of journalists** find press releases to be the most useful type of content provided to them by PR professionals.

While challenges remain, comms pros reported experiencing several downstream benefits of distributing press releases across the newswire.

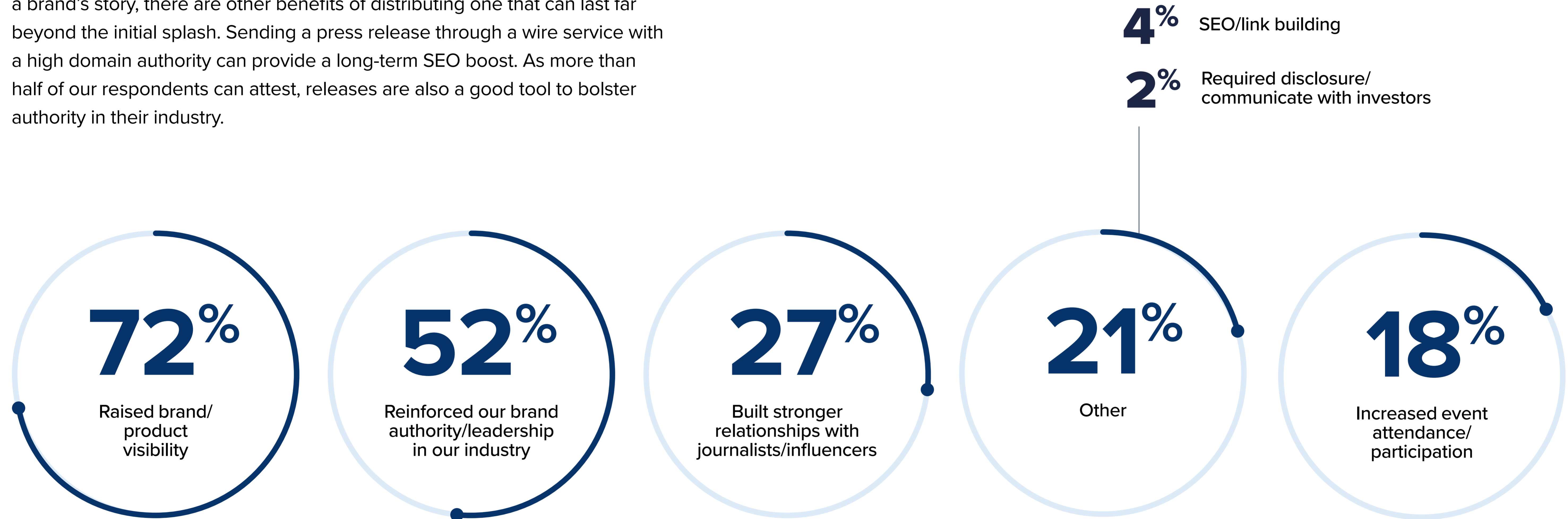
On average, how many press releases do you send over the wire in a year?

These responses are relatively consistent with what we found when we asked this question three years ago. Organizations of all sizes and levels of growth send press releases, so there is no one-size-fits-all approach.



How has sending a press release over the wire helped your organization?

While the overarching objective of a press release is to garner attention for a brand's story, there are other benefits of distributing one that can last far beyond the initial splash. Sending a press release through a wire service with a high domain authority can provide a long-term SEO boost. As more than half of our respondents can attest, releases are also a good tool to bolster authority in their industry.



Comms Professionals Sound Off On the Value of the Press Release

“The impact and opportunity provided by press releases continues to evolve.”

“[Press releases are] SO important! They are necessary and should continue to be as vital as ever to get info out.”

“Newsrooms ALWAYS ask for a press release first. They are a valuable tool in company promotion. You just need to use them effectively.”

“Press releases remain a valuable PR tool. They signal institutional support for a project and create a content spine for future purposes. In addition to going to reporters, they form the spine for social media and other storytelling vehicles.”

What is your top challenge as it relates to press releases?

One-third of respondents told us that a reporter had reached out to them about a press release they sent over the wire. On the other end of the spectrum, some survey participants expressed disappointment that the press releases they distributed had not received the anticipated media pickup.

While there's not one reason alone that releases fail to garner attention from journalists, here are the top culprits:

- **The continued industry-wide shrinking of newsrooms:** In our annual State of the Media Report, 36% of journalists cited “lack of staffing and resources” as one of the biggest challenges for the journalism industry in the last year. So, even if journalists wanted to cover more of the pitches they receive, they are too under-resourced to do so.
- **A failure to optimize the release for maximum engagement:** Including multimedia, crafting a concise and catchy headline and using an easy-to-read format are all must-haves for grabbing attention for a release. However, not all organizations follow these best practices.
- **Not choosing the right distribution target:** PR Newswire offers distribution options based on geography, ethnography, industry and content subject. Despite all of the micro-targeting available, not all comms professionals take advantage of niche distribution.

Not generating anticipated media pickup

38%

Ensuring they reach the right person/people

25%

Making them stand out from other releases

16%

Not having enough newsworthy content

9%

Other

7%

Writing engaging copy

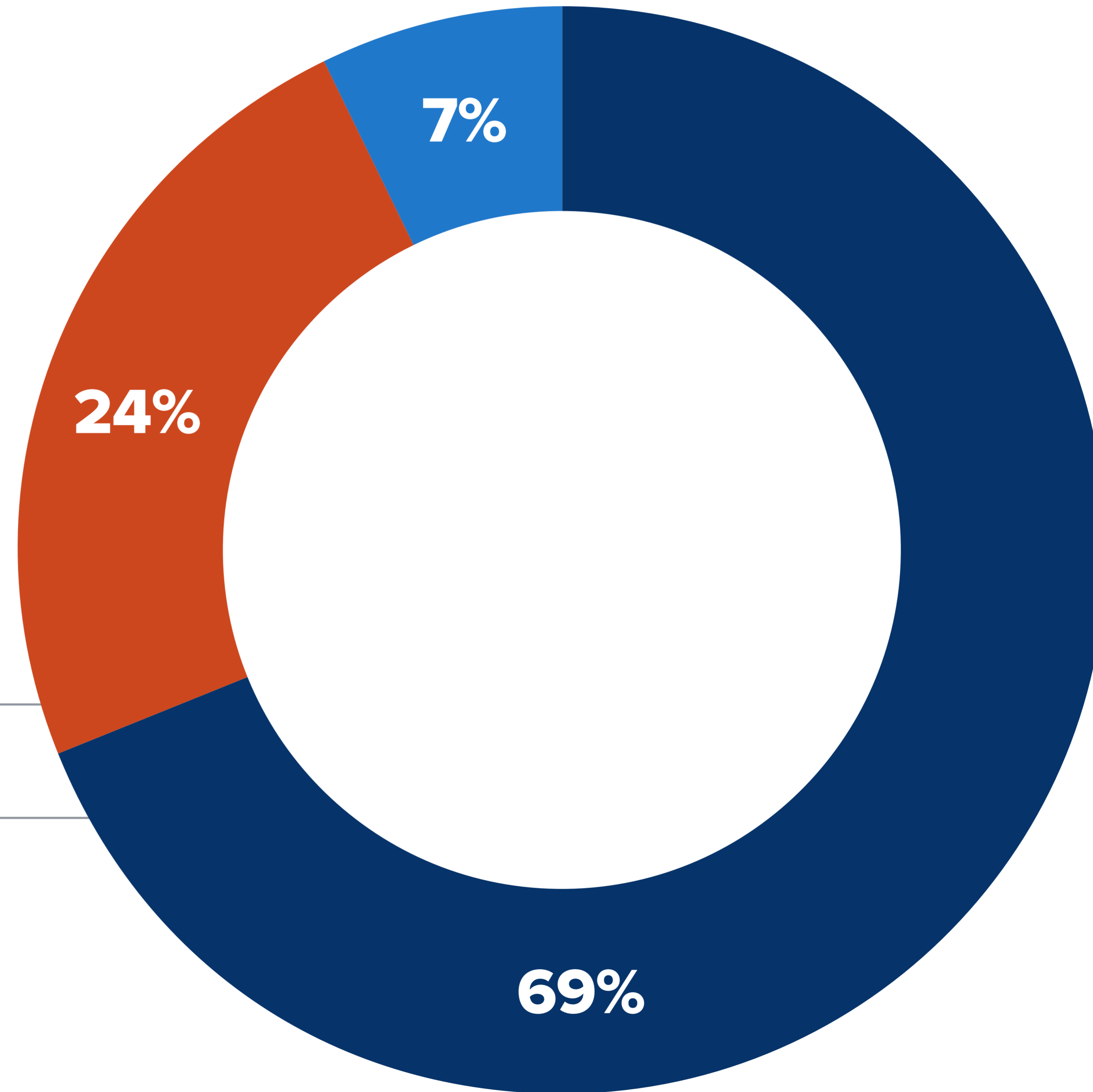
5%

Do you expect the volume of press releases your organization distributes to change in the next 12 months?

As seen in the chart, reports of the death of the press release have been greatly exaggerated. 93% of comms professionals are either maintaining or increasing their press release output in the coming year.

In this year's annual State of the Media Report, as in years past, three out of four journalists stated they wanted to receive press release content from PR pros. Therefore, it makes sense for PR pros to continue to use the press release as a tool to attract attention from journalists.

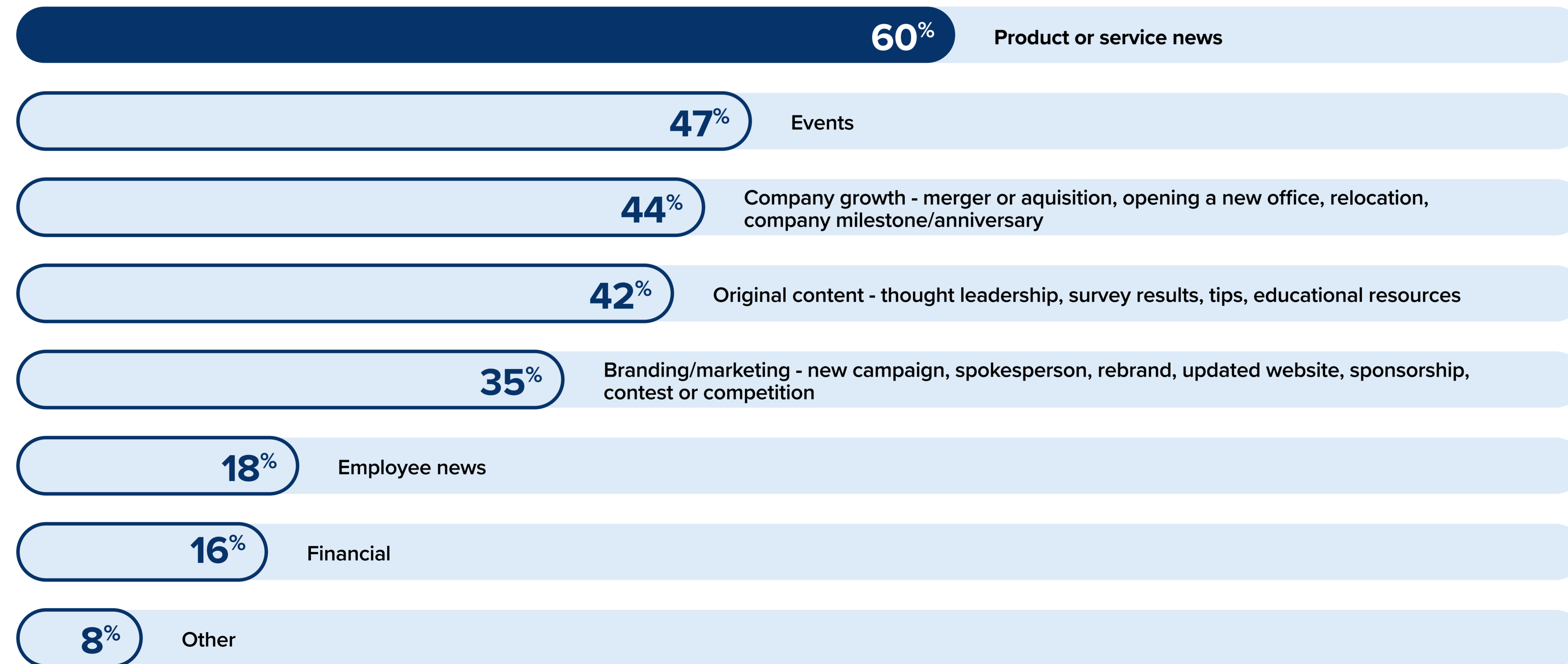
93% sending same or more press releases this year



- 69% - No, we will be sending the same number of releases in the next 12 months
- 24% - Yes, we will be sending more releases in the next 12 months
- 7% - Yes, we will be sending LESS releases in the next 12 months

What is the focus of press releases you plan to send out in the next 12 months?

While some organizations view the press release as a vehicle for primarily sharing their biggest news, others know that newsworthy content comes in all shapes and sizes. Brands who consistently send releases about a disparate set of topics do so to stay top of mind for their audience.



The Influence of Generative AI in Press Release Creation

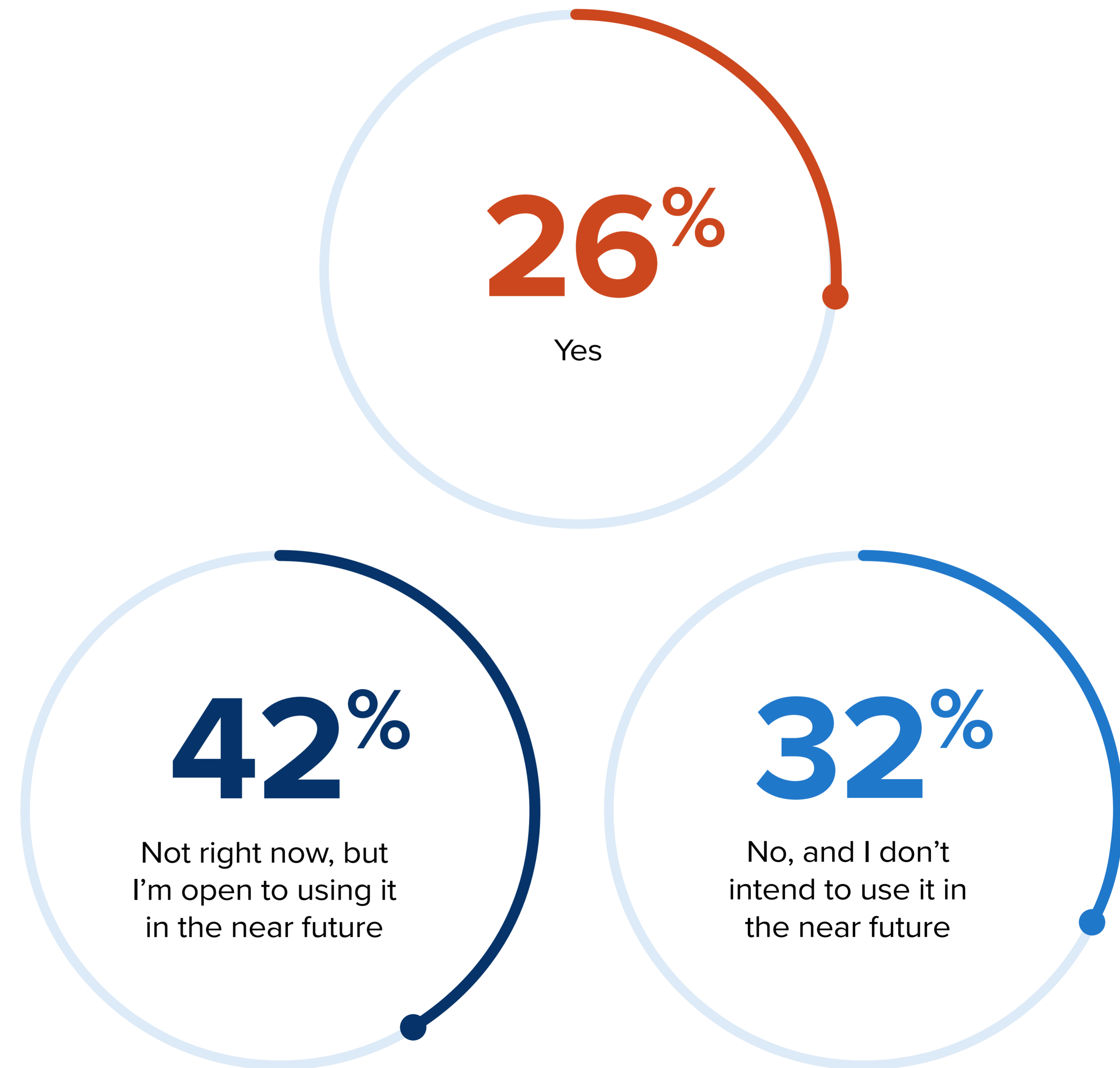
Since the debut of ChatGPT in November 2022, discussions around the impact and implications of generative AI on content creation have permeated the culture. Is gen AI an existential threat to creativity or a revolutionary tool enabling more productivity? While it is difficult to predict where this technology will take us, what's unmistakable is that gen AI has already changed how many PR and comms professionals work.

Are you using generative AI to craft press release content?

Originally developed by Everett Rogers and later modified by Geoffrey Moore, the technology adoption lifecycle is a bell-shaped curve that categorizes users of new technology in the following order:

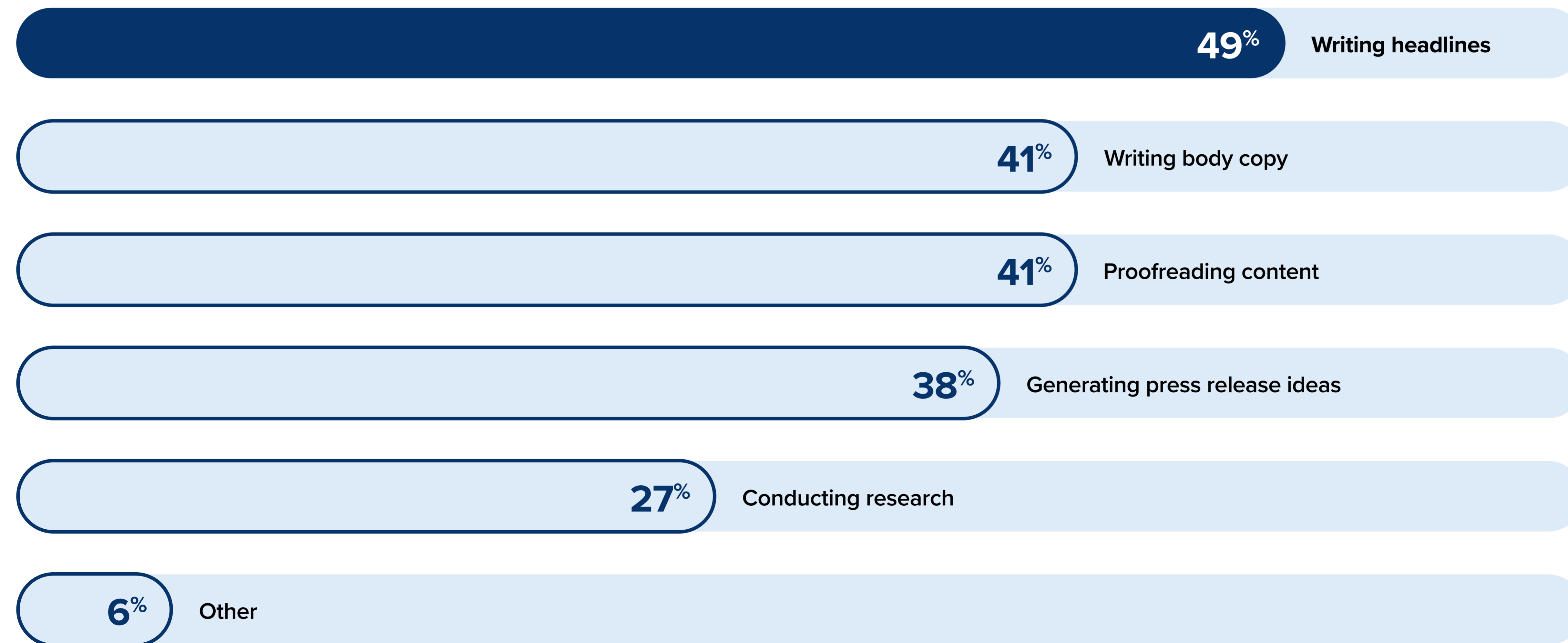
- 1) Innovators (2.5%)
- 2) Early Adopters (13.5%)
- 3) Early Majority (34%)
- 4) Late Majority (34%)
- 5) Laggards (16%)

While not a perfect one-to-one comparison to the model, it's clear that the majority of PR pros have not adopted AI for press release creation.... yet. However, 42% of respondents signaled they are open to using the technology, indicating they may be holding out for improvements.



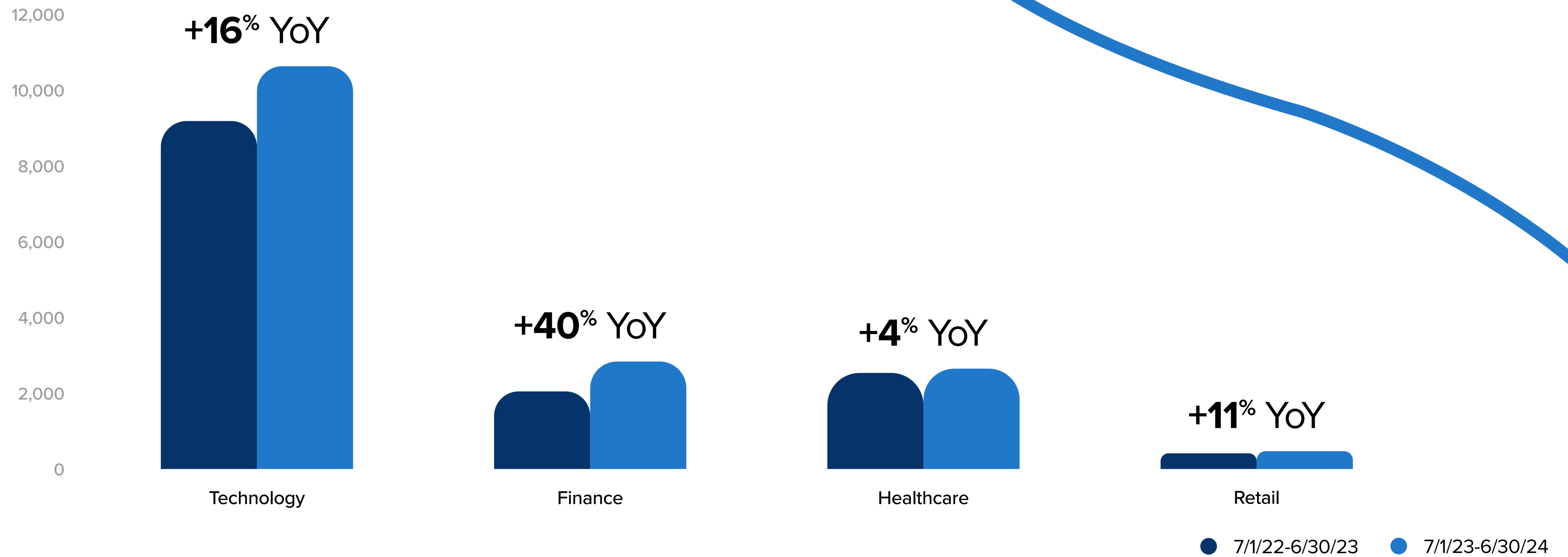
How are you using generative AI to help you craft press release content?

Those who are using gen AI to craft press release content reported doing so carefully and methodically. A couple of respondents compared their use of AI to having an intern who creates the first draft, followed by heavy oversight and editing by a more senior professional. It's important to remember that generative AI is merely a tool to help increase efficiency rather than replace creativity.



AI Mentions in Top Industries

We examined mentions of AI over the last two years from four of the top industries that send press releases across the wire. While it might be expected that the tech industry sent a higher volume of releases using the term “artificial intelligence” relative to other industries, the finance industry saw the largest increase in mentions year-over-year at 40%. Overall, the instances of “AI” in all releases grew 15% this year over last year.



Maximizing Engagement with Optimal Headlines and Multimedia

With thousands of press releases crossing the wire every week, for some brands, grabbing attention for their stories can be tough. As we have done in previous years, we have collected data across PR Newswire's platforms that can serve as a guidepost for writing and formatting a press release designed to maximize engagement.

The most significant areas of a press release where brands can make a difference in increasing engagement are the headline and choosing to include multimedia.

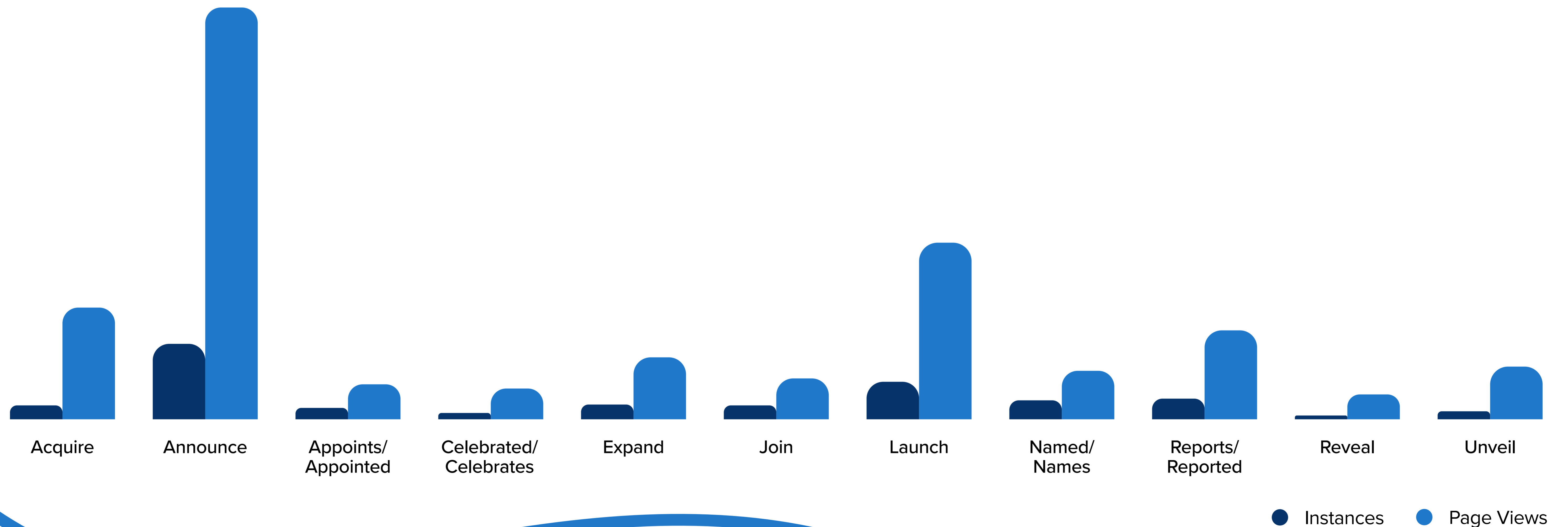
Action Verb Commonality in Headlines vs. Page Views

One of our most consistently sought-after data sets is the volume of press release views relative to the use of popular action verbs in headlines.

Year after year, “announce” is the most ubiquitous action verb to appear in press release headlines. In the past few years, there’s been a mismatch between its use and the number of views those releases receive. This year, “announce” began to close that gap.

When writing press release headlines, it’s important to remember to answer the question, “Why should the reader care?” This can easily be accomplished by using action verbs that get straight to the point.

As we’ve mentioned in previous reports, using intrigue-provoking verbs such as “reveal” and “unveil” can increase interest in a story and garner more views.

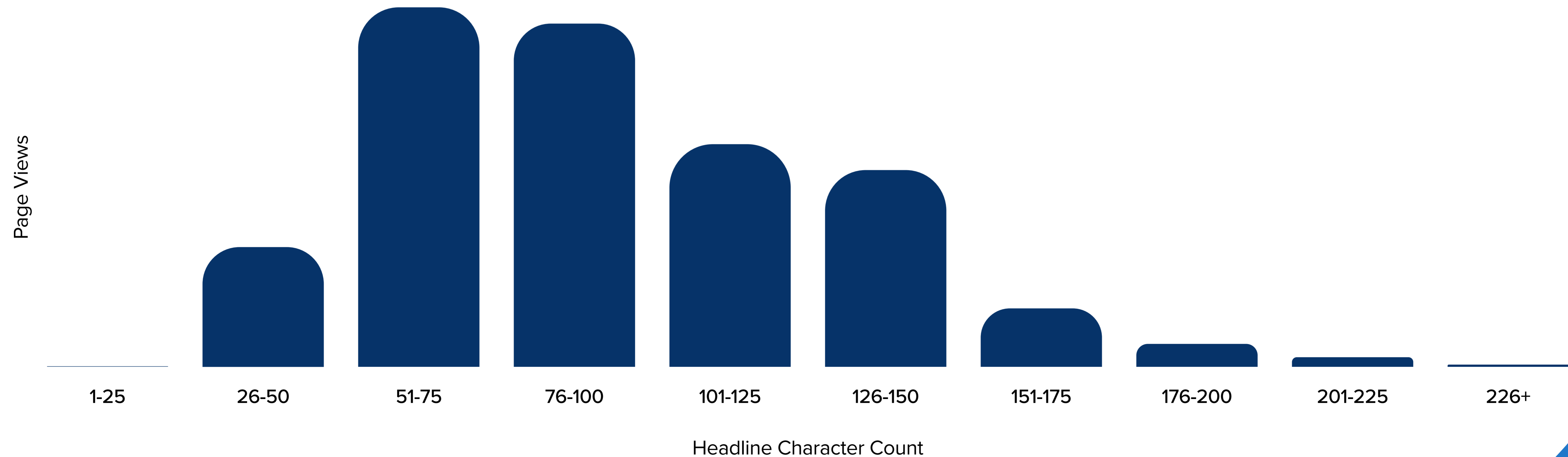


Taking a Headline Count

The common wisdom remains to keep headline counts below 70 characters, if possible. Search engines and email applications clip text beyond that amount, so our press release experts always advise aiming below that number.

As seen in the chart, the sweet spot for maximizing viewership of a release is between 51 and 75 characters, so that should be used as an optimal target. However, viewership for releases between 76 and 100 characters is not far behind, so there's no cause for concern if a headline is slightly longer than 70 characters. Consequently, crafting a headline between 51 and 100 characters is the recommended range to increase the chances the release will be seen.

Average Page Views Per Release Based on Headline Character Count



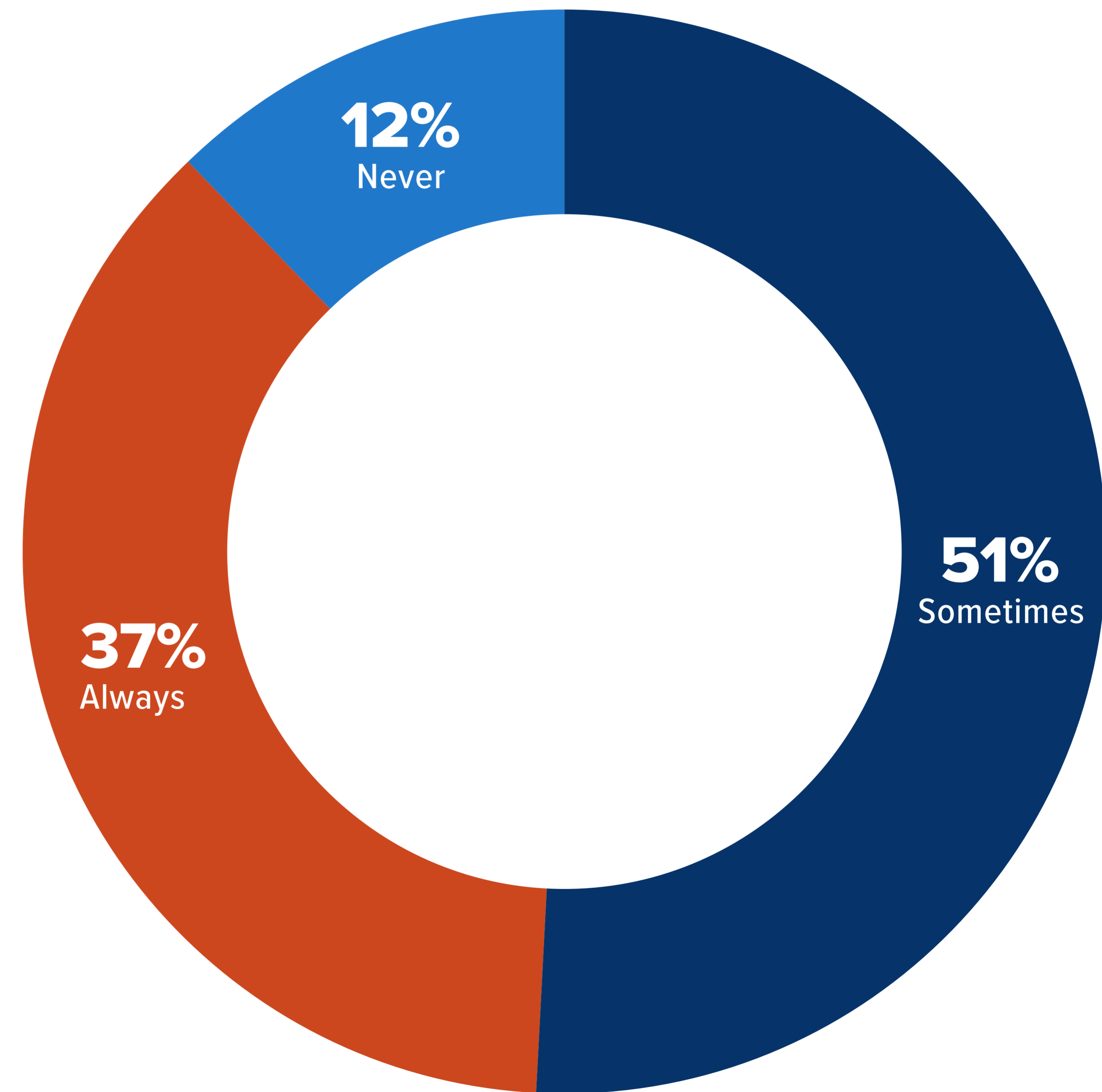
Multimedia Landscape

As the data has shown year after year, including multimedia (defined as photos, videos or infographics) can increase engagement with a release. Visual content is processed in the brain faster and has been shown to remain in the memory longer than text, so including it with a press release will increase the chances the story will leave a lasting impression.

Not only is multimedia key to increasing engagement with a release, but it can also be the tipping point to receiving media coverage. In this year's State of the Media Report, 72% of journalists said they used images provided by a PR professional within the past year.

In a comparison year over year, multimedia attachments on releases distributed by PR Newswire increased by 4%.

How often do you include multimedia in your release?



The Rise of Multichannel Promotion and Distribution

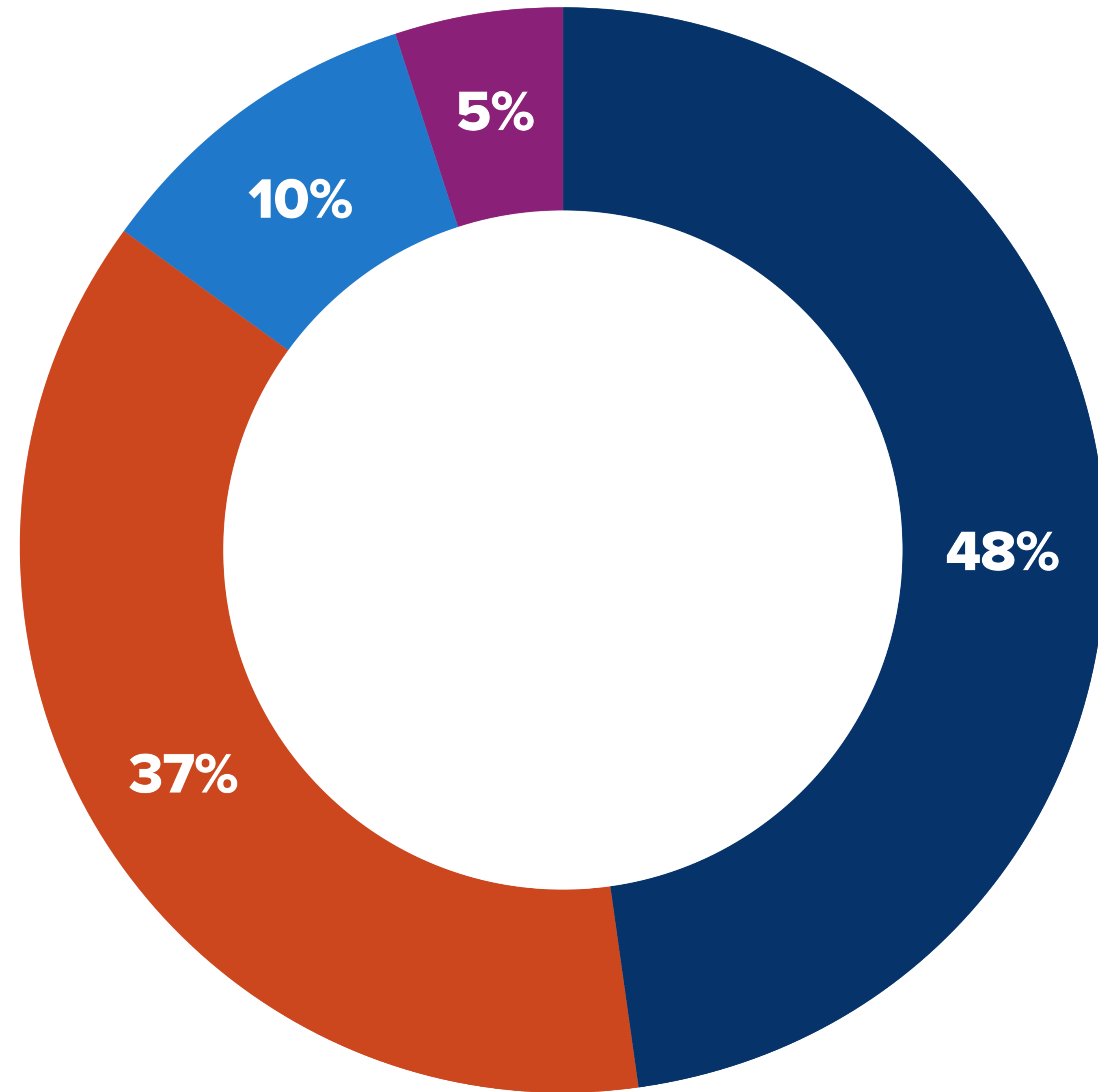
Several respondents to our survey remarked that the press release is one tool that should be part of a larger communications strategy, and we agree. Implementing a multichannel comms strategy has become increasingly common for brands looking to broaden the reach of their message. Multichannel communications strategies not only boost the return on investment in creating comms content, but they've also proven to be more effective. The more platforms on which a message appears, the more opportunities for visibility of a brand's story.

Channel Surfing

92%

of comms professionals reported reusing press release content on other channels.

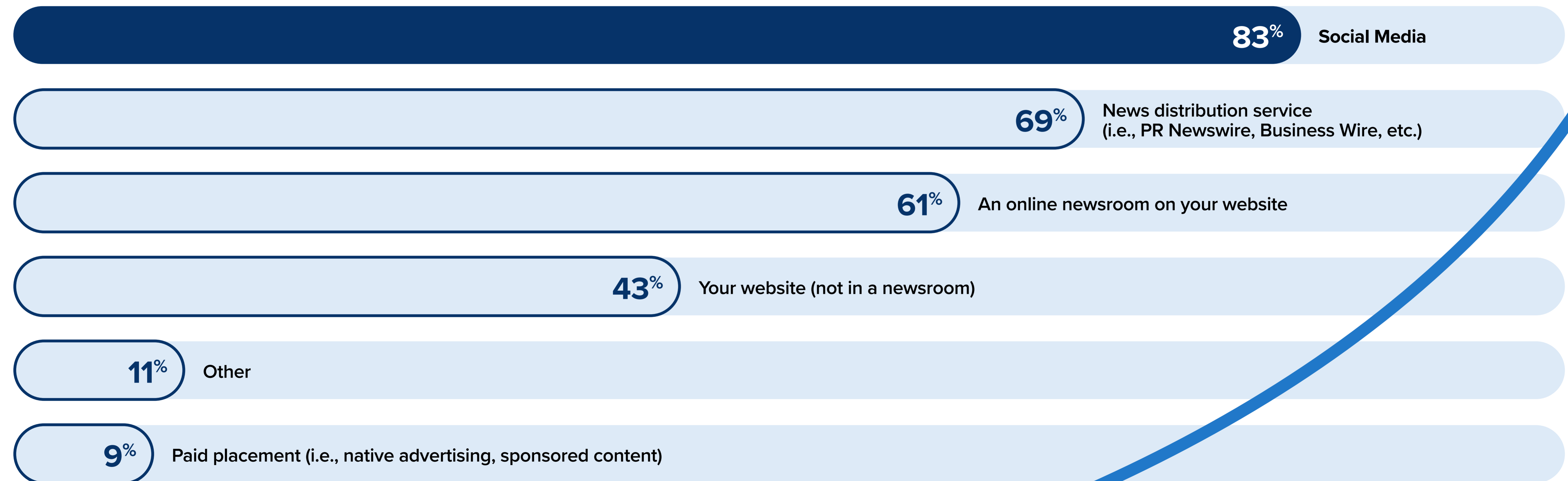
- 48% - Post bits on social media
- 37% - Write blog posts/articles
- 10% - Turn it into a video
- 5% - Other



What channels do you use to promote your press releases?

Because the attention economy is fragmented across a wide range of platforms, comms professionals have turned to the integrated, multichannel strategies their marketing companions have championed for years. While receiving earned media coverage is a PR pro's holy grail, the path to obtaining it is usually paved by utilizing a combination of owned, paid and shared media.

It's worth noting that most of the 11% who selected "Other" said they distribute releases directly to their target audience. Some communicated with stakeholders via email, while others pitched journalists directly or through media databases.



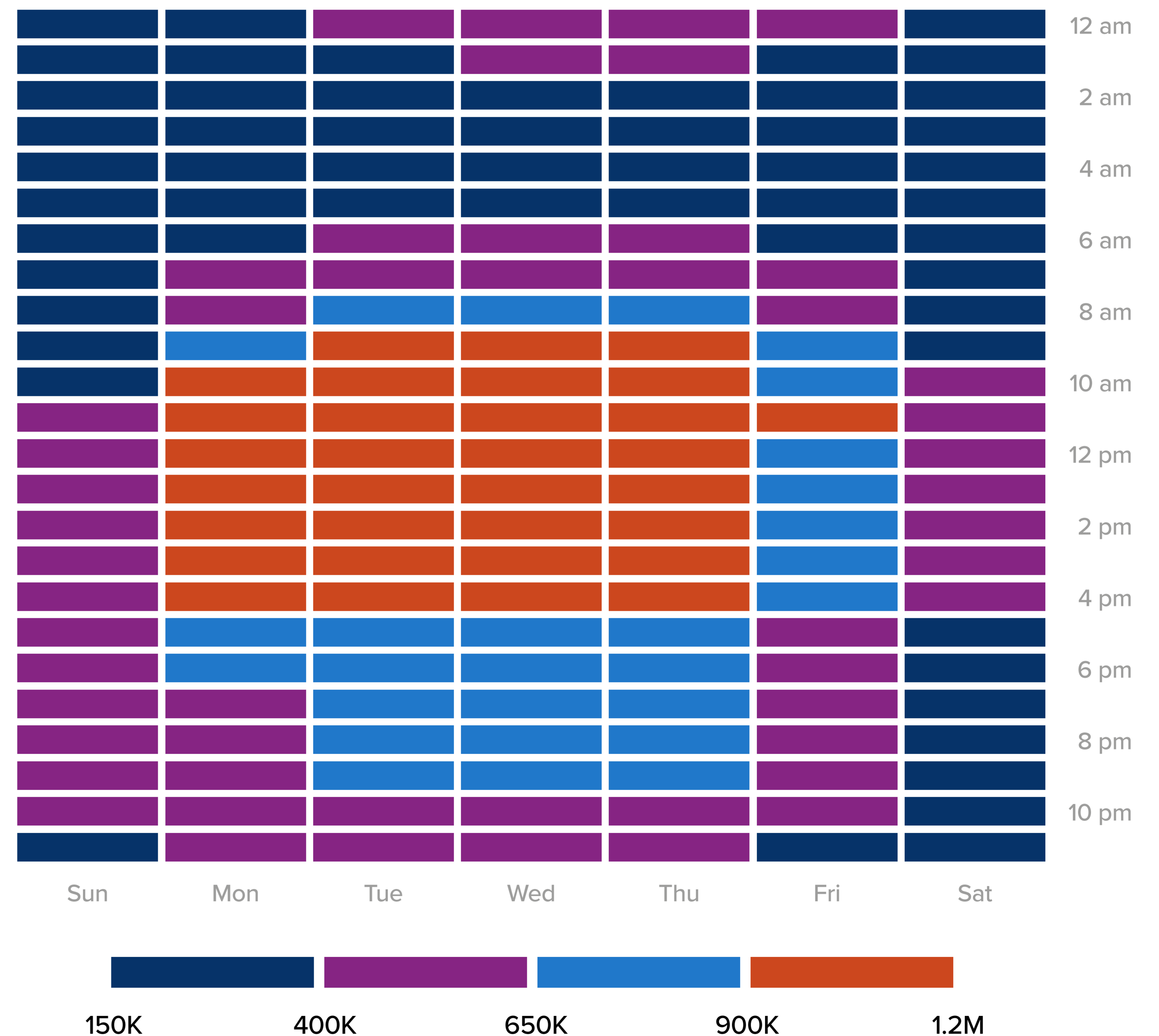
Timing is Everything

Those distributing press releases across the wire often wonder what day and time are optimal for sending them. Knowing when visitors are perusing newswire sites can help comms professionals make that determination.

The chart to the right is a heat map of traffic to PRNewswire.com. As expected, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. are the most popular times on the site. While less popular, the site also receives sizable traffic on Mondays, Fridays and weeknights.

An additional consideration when determining what time to send a release is to avoid the crowds. Most releases are sent at the top or middle of the hour, so in an effort to stand out from the pack, we advise scheduling releases for distribution at an alternative time such as 11:07 or 2:42.

PRNewswire.com Visitors by Time of Day



Conclusion

The press release is the culmination of years or months of hard work, so brands rightfully want to ensure their news resonates with their audience. We hope the insights we've provided in this report pave the way for future releases that receive higher engagement with their intended audience. For brands who distribute their news via press releases, it is clear they are demonstrating authority and trust with their audiences.

Meanwhile, the story of generative AI's use in press release creation is still being written. As we pose questions about AI use in future surveys, we can observe how the technology is shaping the PR and comms industry over time.

Finally, the insights we've gathered from this report have shaped how we at PR Newswire view the solutions we offer to address the biggest challenges in the public relations industry. Our goal is to help brands share their news with the world.

To learn more about how to apply the findings from this year's report to your own communications strategy, schedule a consultation with a PR Newswire expert today.

Methodology

PR Newswire's 2024 State of the Press Release results were pulled from press release data between July 1, 2023, and June 30, 2024.

We analyzed more than 100,000 press releases in the U.S. distributed through PR Newswire's network during this time period. The data was collected using multiple sources including Google Analytics, Adobe Analytics and PR Newswire's proprietary press release processing software. Additionally, multimedia usage and subject trends were analyzed from July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023, and July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024.

PR Newswire conducted its 2024 State of the Press Release survey from July 10 through July 31, 2024. This year's survey collected responses from 665 industry professionals across the United States and Canada.

About PR Newswire

PR Newswire is the industry's leading press release distribution partner with an unparalleled global reach of more than 440,000 newsrooms, websites, direct feeds, journalists and influencers and is available in more than 170 countries and 40 languages.

From our award-winning Content Services offerings, integrated media newsroom and microsite products, Investor Relations suite of services, paid placement and social sharing tools, PR Newswire has a comprehensive catalog of solutions to solve the modern-day challenges PR and communications teams face.

For 70 years, PR Newswire has been the preferred destination for brands to share their most important news stories across the world.