

# PRNews

## PR News and Vocus Survey Reveals Public Relations Professionals in Early Stages of Technology Adoption



---

## PR News and Vocus Survey Reveals Public Relations Professionals in Early Stages of Technology Adoption

With the fundamental shift in the media landscape impacting both the traditional media and public relations industries, many PR professionals are wondering how other PR professionals organize their outreach and analyze their results? What technology and services do my peers use to advance their PR efforts? And most importantly, are my current techniques working or are there better and easier ways to do PR out there? In a recent survey conducted by PR News and sponsored by Vocus, the answers to many of the lingering PR questions were revealed.

The survey findings indicate that the adoption of technology in the PR industry is still in its early stages. While technologies designed for Public Relations are gaining mainstream recognition with Vocus winning the Codie Award for Best Business Productivity Solutions, professionals are just beginning to adopt these new technologies. The survey found that more than 65% still either use a paper-based method or generic technology solution to track and manage their media relations and almost 20% of those same professionals are still using scissors and the local paper to manage and track their news coverage.

Conducted in May 2007, the "Media Relations in Practice" survey takes you inside the minds of 713 PR professionals to discover the new "tools of the trade" in Public Relations and where you fall in the mix. Read below to see how your methods compare to those of other PR professionals.

### Detailed Results

#### Success

Finding the right journalist (89%), Tracking News (75%) and Measuring and Analyzing (63%) are the keys to success

When asked to decide what functions of public relations are most important to their PR success, not surprisingly, an overwhelming 90% of respondents (644 professionals) indicated that reaching the right journalist is "very important" and another 9% finding it somewhat important.

Also not surprising, the increasing stream of news in the 24x7 news cycle, has also made Tracking News (75%) the second most important factor to the critical success of your PR program.

What is surprising is that Measuring and Analyzing has taking third place for the most important function to PR success. While in the past many professionals may not have given much weight to measuring results due to its subjective nature, the survey showed 63% of respondents now consider Measuring and Analyzing one of the most important factors to the critical success of PR, possibly thanks to the emerging technologies with specific analytics tools for PR professionals to accurately measure their work.

Ranking only slightly lower among respondents were Tracking Conversations with the Media and Producing Clip Books and Reports. With 49.5% ranking Tracking Conversations with the Media as important, 5% rated the function as not important at all to the overall success of PR. Producing Clip Books and Reports was also seen as irrelevant by 11% of respondents.

#### Media Relations

Less than 30% have adopted an online media directory designed specifically for PR professionals

When asked what tools they use to assist in their media relations, some PR professionals admitted to using some old-school technology for functions that they determined were critical to their success. The survey found that less than 30% have adopted an online media directory to take advantage of the new wave of technology being offered and designed specifically for PR professionals.

So how are other professionals targeting journalists and tracking conversations? The majority of professionals are still relying on manual techniques. More than 30% use paper-based methods including hardcopy media directories (17%), a rolodex of names and numbers (15%).

A little more than one third of respondents are getting a slight assist from basic technology to manage their media contacts,

using Excel and/or Outlook (34%.) While not as effective as a tailored PR solution, it is one step closer to an automated tool to help manage their contacts.

Only about 28% of PR professionals are taking advantage of advanced Web-based media directories designed specifically to keep track of their target journalists and maintain their own contact list.

And most shocking of all, 5% of respondents indicated that they have decided to ignore managing their media relationships altogether!

### **What tools, if any, do you use to track and manage your media relations? (check all that apply)**

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Excel and/or Outlook	498	34.3%
Web-based Media Directory	414	28.5%
Media Directory (Phone book style)	257	17.7%
Rolodex	210	14.5%
Manage media contact relationships? What's that?	73	5.0%

### **News Tracking/Management**

70% of PR professionals track their company's news at least once a day

Rated another important factor to their overall PR success, news tracking is another area which the survey assessed. The intensity and frequency with which organizations have begun tracking their news and their competitor's news reflects the response of the PR industry to the new 24x7 news cycle in which we live.

More than 70% of PR professionals surveyed track their company's news at least daily. While just over 50% also conduct competitor coverage searches as frequently. In fact, nearly 18% of respondents track their organization's news coverage in real time and 22% track their competitor's news as often.

Many PR professionals are using simple or free methods, some of which limit results or leave a large margin for human error. Despite the limitations of online news the most popular tools, getting nearly one third of respondents' votes, were Google and/or Yahoo searches.

Almost 20% of respondents are still using outsourced clipping services to track their company's news.

Only 17% of PR professionals surveyed are using web-based news monitoring services (17%) to track their news coverage, some of which include additional features that allow them to archive their coverage and track it back to their media outreach.

And, surprising, another 17% of respondents are still using their favorite pair of scissors and the local paper to track their company's news!

### **In House v. Outsourced**

61% track and quantify PR internally

With advancements in technology and solutions designed to make measuring each aspect of your PR program simple, PR professionals are taking their measurement in-house. In fact, 61% of those surveyed indicated that they track and quantify their PR internally, while just 17% have enlisted an outside service. An astonishing 12 percent are not measuring their PR at all.

And two thirds (67%) are looking internally to conduct their PR activities. Just 19% have turned to an external resource, with 13% employing more than one.

The results may reflect respondents' opinions that coordinating activities and measuring results with their agencies may be difficult, with only 13% believing the communication is handled "very well" and 18% weighing in with "OK."

---

## Awareness

PR Newswire, Business Wire and Vocus topped the list

While many PR professionals are aware of newswires, Vocus was the only solution provider that made it into the top three recognized vendors when asked which vendors they are currently familiar. With more than half (52%) of the votes, PR Newswire, Business Wire and Vocus were leading the pack with PRWeb, Factiva and VMS following just behind.

When asked how frequently they use each service, more than 100 respondents had used PR Newswire and Business Wire; between 50 and 100 use Vocus, Factiva and Cision; and between 25 to 50 use vendors like BurrellesLuce, VMS, Magenta (now Meltwater) and others.

## Trends in PR

Social Media and Marketing Lead the Change

When looking at trends and changes that are impacting or will impact the way their organizations conduct public relations, respondents saw the emergence of blogs and other social media (23%) and the increasing importance of public relations in the overall marketing mix (23%) tied for first.

The impact of the internet on the news cycle ranked second with 20% and the blurring lines between PR and marketing (e.g. search engine optimized press releases) came in at 19%. Receiving the least amount of votes was the increased pressure from management to measure impact of public relations with 15%.

## Key Findings

- 23% saw both the emergence of blogs and other social media and the increasing importance of public relations in the overall mix as the two primary factors affecting the way organizations conduct public relations.
- While 99% of respondents rated reaching the right journalist as important to their overall critical success, only 28% have adopted an online media directory designed specifically for PR professionals.
- More than 66% of respondents are using a paper-based method or generic technology solution to track and manage their media relations. Only 28% have adopted an online media directory designed specifically for PR professionals.
- Over 98% of PR Professionals surveyed ranked tracking their organizations' news as important to their overall critical success, and more than half of respondents are tracking news mentions of their company and their competitors on a daily basis. But almost 20% of those same professionals are still using scissors and the local paper to manage and track their news coverage.
- About 20% of organizations have begun conducting hourly or real-time news tracking.
- Measuring and Analyzing PR Initiatives scored a 98% in relation to the critical success of the overall PR program yet 12% of respondents do not measure their PR at all.
- PRNewswire (21%), Business Wire (18%) and Vocus (15%) were the three most recognized names in PR technology. PRWeb ranked fourth with 11%.

## Summary

So, has your company kept up or are you among those that are slow to adopt the latest technology to increase your productivity?

The industry is shifting to keep pace with the change in news, but it is in its early adoption stages. PR is increasingly including more online media and being impacted by the immediate, 24/7 news cycle the Internet enables.

Although the survey results indicate PR professionals understand and feel the pressure to advance both their approach and management of PR, the survey indicates that many PR professionals have still not made the change.

The industry has a tremendous opportunity to take advantage of technology to streamline and enhance their public relations efforts. PR professionals have begun adopting Web technology and other public relation's specific software to assist in activities like media relations, news tracking and measurement.

With more and more technology focused on helping PR professionals compete, soon no PR person will be using their favorite pair of scissors and the local paper to track their company's news!

## **About Vocus**

Vocus, Inc. (NASDAQ: VOCS) is a leading provider of on-demand public relations management. Our web-based software suite helps organizations of all sizes manage local and global relationships and communications with journalists, analysts, public officials and other key audiences. Our software helps customers manage media relations, monitor and analyze their news, conduct interactive email campaigns, build online newsrooms, and manage government relations activities. Vocus' PRWeb platform is also recognized as one of the Internet's leading online news and press release distribution services. Vocus' software is available in five languages and can be accessed from any computer via secure login over the internet with no need for internal hardware, software or IT support. Vocus is based in Lanham, MD with offices in North America, Europe, and Asia. For more information please visit [www.vocus.com](http://www.vocus.com) or call 800.345.5572.