

# PRophet AI Research

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# Key findings

Majorities of PR professionals identify a **dramatic change over the years in their strategies for getting earned media pickup (74%)** – some going as far as describing the process as **impacting their overall ability to be successful in their role** (42% obtaining quality earned media pick up and 39% predicting media interest in pitches). The vast majority (90%) wish there was more they could do in the initial project planning to help gain greater earned media pickup.

**Personal relationships with journalists are more important than ever (89%)** yet maintaining and best utilizing these relationships are not without struggle for many PR professionals. When ranking the importance of key aspects of getting earned media pickup head-to-head, 45% rank quality content as most important, but personal relationships with and understanding of what journalists are interested in are considered most important to many (28%; 28% respectively).

While PR professionals do not necessarily consider themselves tech laggards (5%), **many lack a clear strategy (47%) and rely on their gut when it comes to pitching (72%)**. Use of PR tech platforms trails behind other approaches (54% currently using to help better pitch content), yet interest in such platforms (95%) appears to exceed potential drawbacks.

# Key findings (continued)

**Data privacy is a key concern for PR professionals** when sharing pitch materials with a PR tech platform (84%), **yet overall understanding of what information is stored by PR tech platforms is low** (80% are aware media list may be stored, 54% are aware the story angle may be stored). And four in five (79%) PR professionals say that having lower data privacy risks has a major or moderate impact on their likelihood to utilize one PR tech platform over another.

PR professionals want to be a part of the **changing future of PR** (94%), and AI is a key way for them to do so. PR professionals already see the value, with **92% saying they believe AI is worth exploring and identify benefits when crafting PR materials**, like predicting media interest and sentiment (55%). Majorities even identify the potential for AI to allow professionals to **spend more time on higher-value tasks** (90%). All of this points to PR professionals being ready to use AI tools to help them improve their strategies moving with – not resisting – the future of the industry.

# Methodology

Findings are based on an online survey conducted by The Harris Poll on behalf of [PRophet](#), the first-ever AI-driven PR pitch platform built by and for PR professionals that predicts media interest and sentiment before you pitch, among **127 public Relations professionals**. Respondents were recruited from research panels (n=102), an open web survey link posted on PR-related social media (n=4), and a list of PR professionals provided by PRophet (n=21). The survey was conducted primarily within the United States\* between June 17th and July 11th, 2022.

Raw data were not weighted and are therefore only representative of the individuals who completed the survey.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in our surveys. The sampling precision of Harris online polls is measured by using a Bayesian credible interval. For this study, the sample data is accurate to within  $\pm 8.6$  percentage points using a 95% confidence level. This credible interval will be wider among subsets of the surveyed population of interest.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to other multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to

quantify or estimate, including, but not limited to coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question-wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments.

## The top 4 themes explored in this research include:

- Current landscape when trying to get earned media pickup and relationships with journalists
- Experience with PR technologies and existing limitations
- Data privacy priorities
- The potential impact and uses of AI in the PR industry

# Current hurdles when seeking earned media pickup

PR professionals appear to acknowledge a shift in pitching and getting earned media pickup, with more than three-quarters saying traditional ways to pitch are not always effective or efficient (78%) and that it is more difficult to get earned media pickup than it was in the past (77%). Further, about two in five PR professionals cite obtaining quality earned media pickup (42%) or predicting media interest in pitches (39%) as challenges that impact their ability to be successful in their job. About three-quarters (74%) say their strategies for getting earned media pickup have changed dramatically over the years. Currently, when seeking earned media pickup, PR professionals most commonly lean on focusing on creating high-quality content that resonates with journalists (64%), sharing content via social media (60%), or reaching out to journalists they have a personal relationship with (54%). Only 2 in 5 (39%) submit content to

press release syndication platforms. The vast majority of PR professionals (90%) wish there was more they could do in the initial project planning to help gain greater earned media pickup, which is another sign that they know that traditional methods are not always effective.

# Spotlight on media relationships

Nearly 9 in 10 PR professionals (89%) believe personal relationships with journalists are more important than ever before. Yet about half (53%) feel like they do not have the capacity to maintain personal relationships with journalists, and a quarter of (27%) say this is a challenge that impacts their ability to be successful in their job. And on top of simply maintaining these relationships, journalists may be more hyper-focused on pitch content than ever before, as about 4 in 5 PR professionals believe due diligence among journalists when reviewing pitches has become stricter over the years (80%) and that journalists are more skeptical of pitches now than in the past (77%). When ranking importance of key aspects of getting earned media pickup head-to-head, about half rank quality content as most important, but relationships and understanding of journalists are considered most important to many.

	Creating quality content that resonates with journalists	Understanding what journalists are interested in	Personal relationships with journalists
Most important	45%	28%	28%
2 <sup>nd</sup> most important	26%	43%	31%
3 <sup>rd</sup> most important	29%	30%	41%

# Appetite for improved PR tech

Very few PR professionals consider themselves, or their company, a tech laggard (5% and 13% respectively), yet a third (34%) find incorporating new tools and technology a challenge that impacts their ability to be successful in their job. Focusing specifically on pitching, nearly half (47%) do not feel like they have a true strategy and seven in ten (72%) say they rely on their gut more than they should have to. **To date, PR professionals most commonly rely on past experience (75%), relationships with journalists (66%), or research conducted by a team member (63%) to help better pitch content – slightly more than half (54%) rely on a PR tech platform.** Among those who are using a PR tech platform, most (72%) say this platform uses AI. For most, their current approach is not enough as four in five PR professionals (80%) say they need better tools to help improve earned media pickup for pitches and three in five (61%) say the current tools and methods they use to help better pitch content are not sufficient.

Thinking specifically about PR tech platforms, professionals most commonly say they could help their organization better pitch content by being more cost effective (54%), helping to adjust pitches to be more relevant (54%), providing results and recommendations more quickly (52%), and identifying media interest (51%). Among those who do not use a PR tech platform to help better pitch content, key reasons are being cost prohibitive (41%), data privacy concerns (36%), and time constraints (29%). Additionally, three-quarters of PR professionals (75%) say collaborating on pitches can be hard if the whole team does not have access to the same PR tech platforms and two-thirds (64%) worry about unknowingly going over budget by relying on PR tech platforms. Despite these hesitations, nearly all PR professionals (95%) would be interested in using a PR tech platform to predict earned media interest and sentiment prior to pitching.

# Understanding and importance of data privacy

PR professionals (84%) are at least somewhat concerned about data privacy as a whole when sharing pitch materials with a PR tech platform. Nearly 9 in 10 (87%) are comfortable with the type of pitch information that may be stored by PR tech platforms. Yet there may be some gaps in knowledge on what information can be stored, 80% identifying media list and contact information and only 54% saying story angle. **9 in 10 PR professionals (90%) say it is important that all data related to the pitch process belong to and stay with their organization, including 52% who strongly agree. A similar proportion (91%) say that company ethics, including privacy concerns, drive decisions on who their organization decides to work with and about 4 in 5 (79%) PR professionals say that having lower data privacy risks has a major or moderate impact on their likelihood to utilize one PR tech platform over another.**

# AI potential within the PR industry

The vast majority of PR professionals (94%) want to be a part changing the future of the PR industry. And nearly nine in ten (87%) believe this future could be majorly or moderately impacted by AI. Specifically, more than nine in ten PR professionals believe AI has the potential to change the way PR is conducted (93%) and that it is worth exploring (92%). A similar proportion of those not already using AI (91%) believe they personally are at least somewhat likely to use AI in their professional life in the near future, including 56% who think it is very likely. Key potential benefits of using AI when crafting PR materials included better ability to predict media interest and sentiment (55%), increased spread (50%), and matching content with journalists (49%). **About four in five PR professionals (83%) feel AI could help solve staffing shortages** (something 45% of PR professionals highlight as something that is currently impacting

their ability to be successful at work). Further, **nine in ten (90%) believe AI will make it possible for professionals to spend more time on higher value tasks.** Though some unknowns do exist, as **85% wish they knew more about AI capabilities within the industry and half (50%) admit they have no idea what AI could do for the PR industry.**

**PRophet** ×  **The Harris Poll**  
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**Thank you.**