

CONTENTS

Case Study1,3
Consumer Data2
Events Calendar2
Slide of the Week2
Measurement5,6,7
The Week in PR8



CASE STUDY

BY KRISTEN GUCWA, EVP, THE RICHMAN GROUP

How a Residential Apartment Brand Stood Out in a Sea of Sameness as It Extended Its Footprint



In 2013, Richman Signature Properties (RSP) became the new luxury division of **The Richman Group**, the nation's 7th largest residential apartment owner. The Richman Group had been known only for developing affordable housing. The luxury apartment rental sector was a new realm for the company, which required marketing to do some heavy lifting.

CHALLENGES

Within a year of launch, RSP needed to boost brand awareness as it created properties. There were other issues:

1. For decades, renting has been considered a transient way of life and done out of necessity—people rent because they can't buy. It wasn't considered a long-term solution, and much less, a lifestyle choice. RSP was on a mission to reimagine rental living by building and designing properties that provided a "forever home" experience.

2. More U.S. households are renters than at any point in 50 years, says **Pew Research**. With demand high and developers building cookie-cutter apartments, RSP knew it had to create a strong identity to stand out from its competitors.

STRATEGY AND TACTICS

If RSP was going to stand out in a sea of sameness, it knew it needed to understand its audience before entering each market. As a result, it held focus groups in each market to get an understanding of what appeals to residents in the cities it planned to enter. Based on the findings of

focus groups and secondary research, the company laid out a plan to reimagine rental living. It started with simple outreach to local vendors and grew from there.

RSP went a step further, embracing culture and customizing experiences, respectively. It did this by offering more than resort-style amenities and beautiful homes. Rather, it encouraged social connectivity and individuality among residents in each market. This idea of getting to know your neighbors was unique for the formerly transient world of rentals. This meant a strong focus on training staff in emotionally connecting with the residents.

Finding an apartment used to mean making concessions on amenities, personal expression, lifestyle, or more. For renters, it was common to downsize expectations to fit inside the available options. RSP wanted to provide everything discerning residents typically seek and more by thinking outside the box. The company decided to focus on these tactics to bring this to life:

1. RSP wanted to partner with national and local brands to offer perks unseen elsewhere. Some of the brands include **Under Armour's** Fitbit, online interior design service **Laurel & Wolf**, grocery delivery service **Shipt** and pet toy and treat delivery service **BarkBox**. As for local brands and restaurants, each property created its own identity based on the residents and crafts partnership opportu-

Continued on page 3



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TO DRIVE TRUE
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 1:30-3:00 PM ET

**MEDIA RELATIONS
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DECEMBER 7, 2017
 WASHINGTON, D.C.

**TOP WOMEN IN PR
AWARDS LUNCHEON**

JANUARY 23, 2018
 NEW YORK CITY

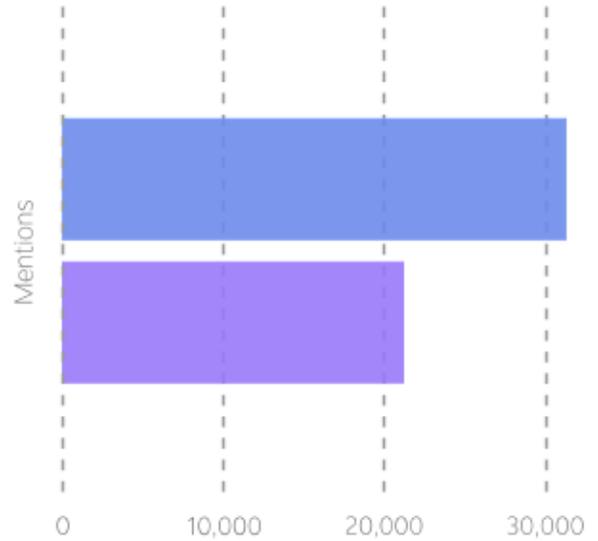
Survey Data Upends Beliefs About Beauty Influencers and Airline Service

As you know, influencers must disclose that they are receiving benefits from brands in exchange for their services, per **Federal Trade Commission** (FTC) regulations. As we saw this year, the FTC has begun to whack not only brands for failure to insist on influencer disclosure, but also has acted against influencers themselves (*PRN*, September 12, 2017).

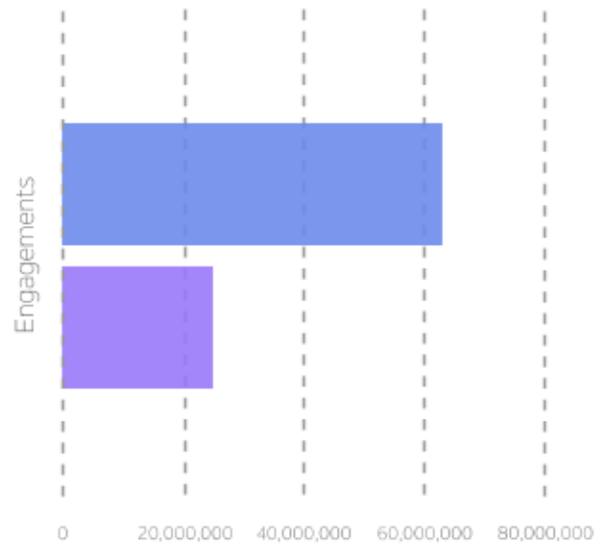
From a brand perspective, the fear was that having influencers add disclosure notices to their posts would damage their and the post's credibility with fans. The charts on the right side of this page seem to say otherwise, at least for influencers in the beauty space.

When 1,000 of the world's leading beauty influencers affixed the hashtags #AD and #SPON to their content, not only did mentions of their posts grow 54% year over year, but engagement quadrupled (see lower chart, right). The blue bar indicates mentions and engagement from January through September 2017, the purple bar shows mentions and engagements from January through September 2016. The charts are from *Global Influencer Marketing: Insights from Beauty*, released December 5 by **Traackr** and **Talk PR**.

The lower chart also tips a sacred cow: people go on social media to complain about bad service. French data firm **Digimind** looked at social mentions of airlines during the Thanksgiving period (November 19-26). As you can see on the lower chart, airlines had more positive than negative social mentions. In addition, the most talked-about feature was positive service, besting timeliness and comfort. The takeaway is conventional: brands, regardless of industry, should monitor the social conversation. ■



USAGE OF #AD & #SPON



ENGAGEMENTS WITH #AD & #SPON CONTENT



Sources: *Global Influencer Marketing* (upper charts); *Digimind* (lower table)

Brand Offers Perks Designed for Local Tastes

nities pursuant to that. Examples of local partnerships range from restaurants delivering meals to the property, bands playing on site, as well as sports teams and retail shops, artists and influencers. Both the national and local partnerships have played the largest roles in creating curated experiences.

2. In every city, RSP found residents craved social connectivity and relied on their living environment to provide access to meet new people—they wanted to meet their neighbors through enriching experiences. Accordingly, RSP organized events and social clubs for all types of residents, such as book clubs, running clubs, wine clubs and even clubs for cigar lovers, throughout all of its properties.

But not all events and clubs are the same. For example, the Dallas property hosted an art show featuring local artists. As Dallas' art scene is booming, the event resonated.

3. Common sign-up incentives include waiving move-in or application fees, or having 1 free month's rent. RSP wanted to offer something more personalized and tailored. Through the brand partnerships, it created move-in gift options per residents' tastes. All cities also have a local move-in gift based on what resonates most with area residents.

4. Astute apartment hunters are turned off by cookie-cutter apartment options. Through its partnership with Laurel & Wolf, RSP residents have access to a collection of on-trend paint colors selected exclusively for RSP residents.

5. RSP knew that to accomplish having an elevated brand experience for residents, it needed on-site teams that knew how to emotionally connect with them. As such, the Signature Lifestyle Specialist training was born. All on-site staff is flown to Florida for a multi-day training consisting of learning skills and emotionally connecting them to their roles. Skills training includes EQ vs. IQ, role-playing techniques and a deep dive into the brand.

Each property has a Brand Ambassador who has attended a multi-day boot camp, engages in weekly marketing sessions, and attends marketing conferences.

6. The company is compiling its first influencer program. Each property is working with local influencers to create events for residents and the public.



Big Design in Big D: Partner Laurel & Wolf designed this Dallas rental. Source: RSP

RESULTS

The strategy and tactics directly translated to an increased demand for new clubs, partnerships, experiences and more from residents at each property. Richman Signature has implemented 10 Brand Ambassadors, one at each property.

Brand Ambassadors for a property or developer are an unparalleled feature, driving the key messages of individuality and social connectivity for Richman Signature communities. Currently, every city has up to 20 local partners.

LESSONS LEARNED

RSP offers new residents a choice of carefully selected move-in gifts. When RSP first launched, it offered the same gifts in each market. While much of the research RSP conducted prior to establishing properties revealed residents had interests that were specific to the part of the country where they lived, the company provided uniform welcome gifts.

Over time, RSP learned that what might be extremely popular in one market was not in another. For example, in South Florida, which has a fast-paced lifestyle and traffic can be heavy, time-saving gifts like grocery delivery were most popular. Denver residents wanted local and organic. RSP changed tactics to create market-specific, customized move-in gifts. ■

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An advertisement for the PRNews Media Relations Next Practices Conference. The top part features a cityscape with an American flag. Below that, the text reads: "PRNews MEDIA RELATIONS NEXT PRACTICES CONFERENCE Social Media | Measurement | Media Training | Crisis Management DECEMBER 6-7, 2017 • WASHINGTON, D.C." The bottom part of the ad includes registration information: "Register: www.mediarelationsconf.com Questions? Contact Jessica Placencia at jessica@accessintel.com." The bottom of the ad shows a street scene with people walking and cars.

How Katie Paine Ties PR's Contribution to Business Through Journalists' Reporting

[Editor's Note: Each week we highlight a slide from a *PR News* presentation of interest to readers. This week's slide comes from Katie Paine, the measurement guru and *PR News* columnist who heads **Paine Publishing**. She spoke at *PR News*' Measurement Boot Camp last month in NY. If you have an interesting presentation to share, please contact: sarenstein@accessintel.com]



Katie Paine
CEO,
Paine
Publishing

As journalists, initially we freaked upon seeing the slide below, showing prominent scribes who cover TV listed in a ranking that reminded us of how sports pages list baseball's top hitters or pitchers. Still, we know and trust Katie Paine and decided to hear the story behind this slide.

In an interview, Paine explained one of the things she does for clients is to show them how PR contributes to business goals.

In this case the client is the PR department of a company. We agreed not to name the company.

As in many PR efforts, goal setting is critical. The client sets up goal conversions in **Google Analytics** at the outset. For example, a PR goal could be getting a potential customer to visit the web site, once there to watch a video, subscribe to a free newsletter, request information or download an app.

In this case, you're seeing some of 30 journalists whose reporting the client considers most influential for its business. Each article the journalists write receives what Paine calls her

Quality Media Score, based on criteria, such as: Did the article mention the client? Did it include the client's message? A quote from an executive or spokesperson? A desirable visual? A Call to Action? The article and its writer receive a positive or negative score. Paine and her staff score hundreds of articles monthly.

The value of the Quality Media Index, a compilation of the scores, is that it correlates well with goal conversions, she says. When the Quality Media Index rises, goal conversions rise also, she says. The figures on the left side of the slide relate to the correlation Paine did between the Quality Media Index and goal conversions.

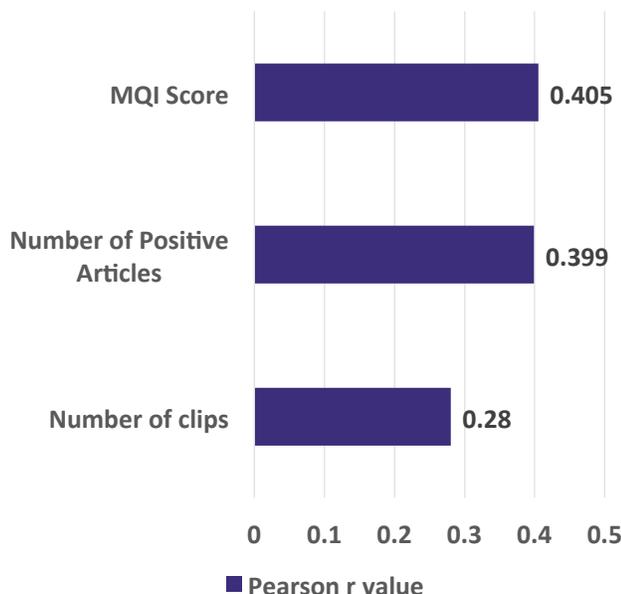
"What's interesting," Paine says, "is what we're really doing is tracking message communications...I can't say because [the least positive journalist on the slide] Cynthia Littleton wrote a nice article about the client, more people downloaded the digital app...but what I can say is that by investing the resources to insure influential reporters like Cynthia are getting your key messages out there...more goal conversions are happening and everyone is happy."

Another positive is efficiency. Years ago, prior to the Quality Score, "You had 10 different criteria, 10 different charts and nobody paid any attention to it." The Quality Score bypasses all of that. "Basically it says, 'Let's have a conversation up-front about...a reasonable indicator that PR is contributing to the business.'" ■

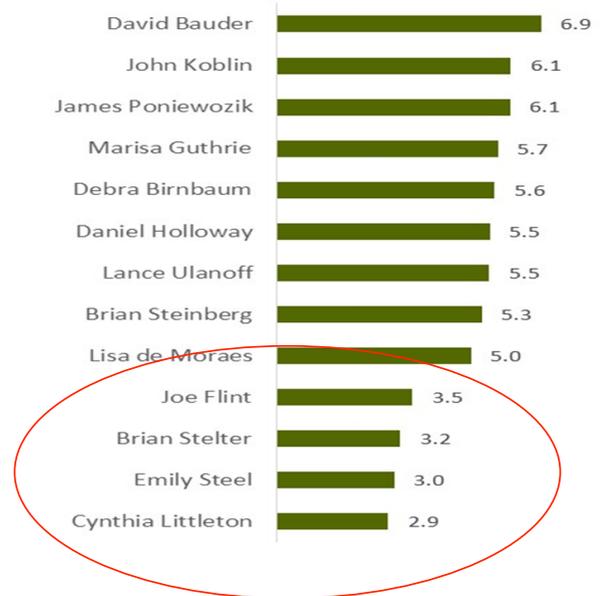
CONTACT: kdaine@painepublishing.com

Tying business goals & PR activity makes decisions easier

Correlation to Goal Conversions & Value



Quality Index for Targeted Authors



PR News/PublicRelay Research: Reliable Media Data That Drives Strategy Remains Elusive

Digital communications makes nearly all actions and results quantifiable. This should enable communicators to have an easier time proving the value of their work. But if all actions lead to data, what does data lead to? Merely proving value isn't enough—not if senior leaders have a bias about the business value of PR, beyond getting favorable coverage in the *Wall Street Journal*.

Communicators must take the next step with data. They need to turn communications data into larger business goals instead of using it to prove one's worth as a communicator (*PRN*, November 7, 2017). Easier said than done.

"Sometimes we get so excited with data that we put everything in" presentations, says Shilpa Mehta, **Google's** principal analytical. "Often, dashboards are not one-page affairs but rather 28-tab **Excel** files or 34-slide **PowerPoint** decks... it's nearly impossible to distill a cogent understanding of what happened and what action should be taken." The take-away: "Be a communicator, not a dump truck."

Andrew Bowins, executive director, corporate reputation, **KMPG**, (picture, page 1) says communicators need to evolve from being "deli-counter providers of data reports to being a strategic partner and provider of insights to the enterprise."

To gain a better understanding of the day-to-day role of measurement and media analysis, *PR News* and **PublicRelay**, a media monitoring and analytics firm, surveyed in October-November 2017 select communicators at the director level and, separately, at the VP level and above.

LACKING CONSISTENTLY RELIABLE DATA

We learned there is profound uncertainty about the uses of data and of the value of the communications data that's shared with senior leaders. Nearly 75% of director-level communicators said, when asked how prepared they are with quality media analytics data to make decisions, that they "sometimes have good data, but the quality is not consistently reliable."

Only 19% of director-level communicators said they are prepared with accurate data they can trust.

Similarly, 72% of VP-level and above communicators said

they have good data sometimes, but the quality is not consistently reliable. Only 25% of respondents in this group said they are always prepared with accurate data they can trust.

For VP-level and above communicators, the sense of a lack of reliable data is compounded by growing demands from CEOs and executive boards for more data-driven analysis. 60% of respondents said they are under increasing pressure from above to defend their work with data.

Speed of data collection and the cost of analytics are less important to respondents than the accuracy and insightfulness of data. Better accuracy and insight were ranked the most important changes they wanted to see in their media intelligence process, above speed, lower cost and comprehensiveness of media coverage. This was the case for both director-level and VP-level and above respondents.

DIRECTORS-VP DIVIDE ON DATA

Nearly 40% of director-level communicators are finding it difficult to understand the media analysis data they're receiving, saying they spend a great deal of time cleaning up data, searching for insights and building their media analysis story.

On the other hand, VP-level and above communicators are finding it easier to understand the media analysis data they're receiving. Roughly 25% of respondents said it's easy for them to share data-centered stories and insights with the C-suite directly; 61% said it's "somewhat easy..."

The proliferation of data has been a mixed blessing. Theoretically, data should provide business insights and align communicators more closely with business goals. The reality is more complex. Asked if they are spending more or less time on media analysis and intelligence this year compared to 2016, 44% of directors and 64% of VP-level and above communicators said they are spending more time. When asked which activities they'd rather be doing than media analysis, 69% of directors said building strategic messaging plans and 65% said pitching or focusing on influencer outreach.

[Please see results of the PR News/PublicRelay survey on the following pages.] ■

PRNews WRITER'S GUIDEBOOK

PR News' 2nd Edition of The Writer's Guidebook Focuses on Everything from Press Releases to Speeches and Social Media

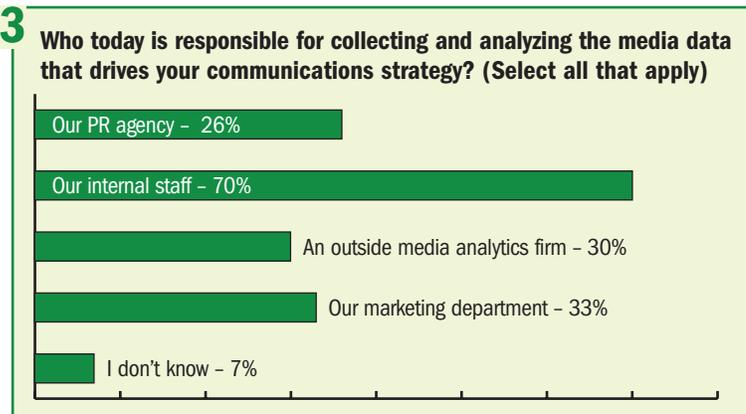
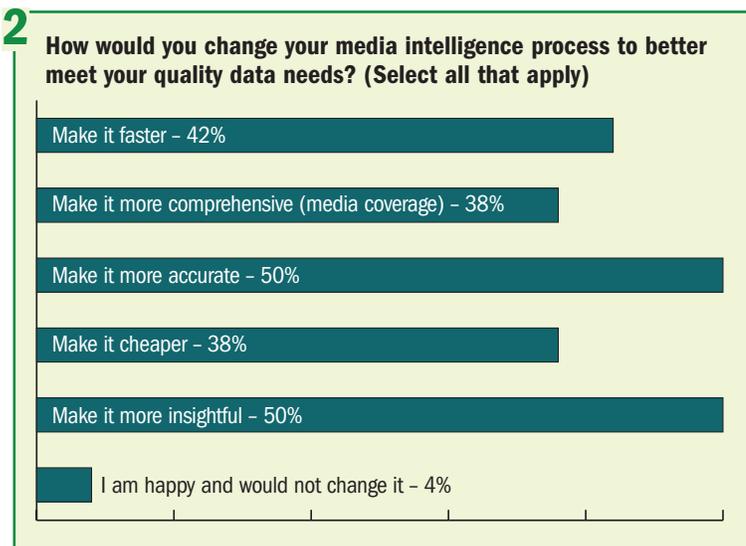
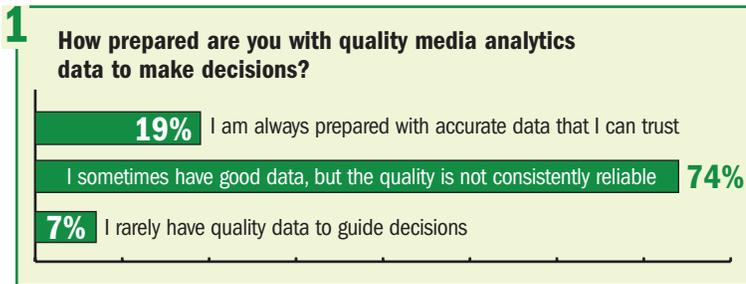
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PR News/PublicRelay Survey: Are You Building Data-Driven Communications Strategies? (director level)

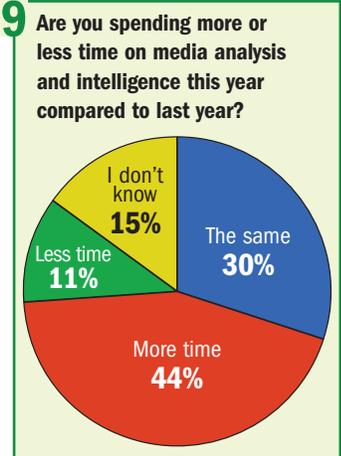
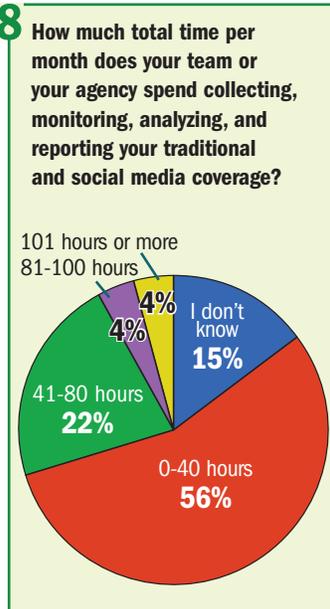


6 Please rank the following media analysis outputs by level of importance. (1 being high and 5 being low)

	1	2	3	4	5
Share of Voice versus that of competitors or peers	34%	19%	27%	8%	12%
Authors or outlets that are not writing about us but are covering our peers or competitors	20%	28%	20%	4%	28%
Uncovering industry influencers (pundits, academics, regulators, etc.)	28%	20%	36%	4%	12%
How my traditional media is being shared across social media	36%	24%	28%	0%	12%
Sentiment for my brand or reputation drivers (concepts - not keywords)	44%	28%	12%	4%	12%
Accurate intelligence that I can quickly share with my CEO or Board	40%	20%	16%	8%	16%

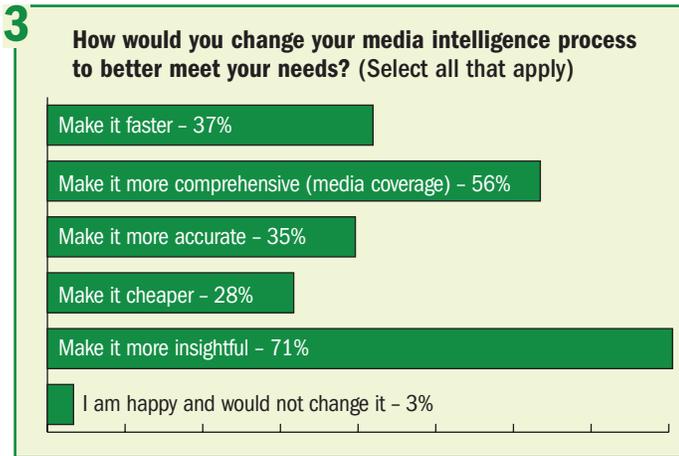
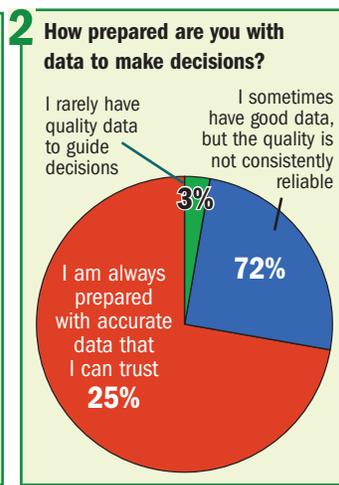
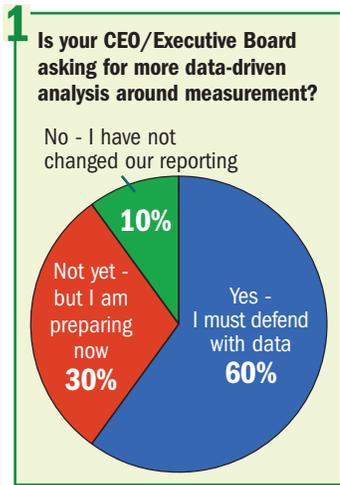
7 Please rank the following media analysis outputs by how you are executing these today. (1 being very well and 5 being poorly)

	1	2	3	4	5
Share of Voice versus that of competitors or peers	22%	26%	30%	11%	11%
Authors or outlets that are not writing about us but are covering our peers or competitors	7%	15%	44%	7%	26%
Uncovering industry influencers (pundits, academics, regulators, etc.)	11%	22%	37%	15%	15%
How my traditional media is being shared across social media	33%	14%	33%	11%	8%
Sentiment for my brand or reputation drivers (concepts - not keywords)	15%	42%	34%	4%	4%
Accurate intelligence that I can quickly share with my CEO or Board	23%	27%	31%	8%	12%



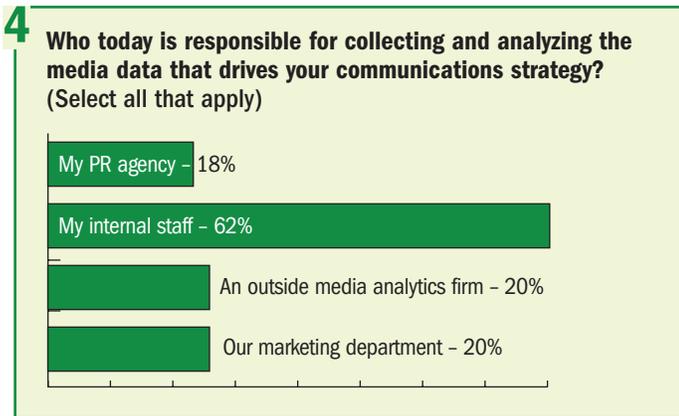
Source: PublicRelay and PR News, communications professionals, director level, November 2017

PR News/PublicRelay Survey: Are You Building Data-Driven Communications Strategies? (VP level and higher)



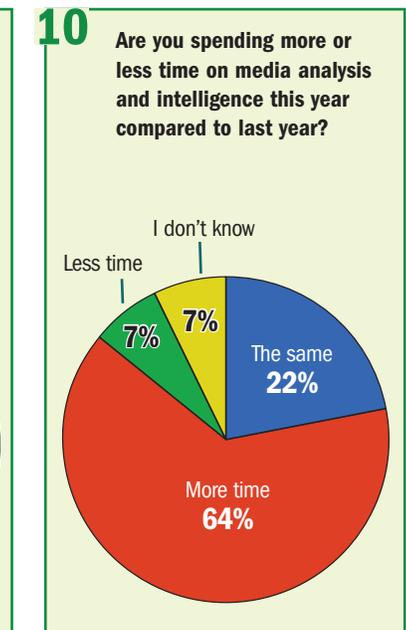
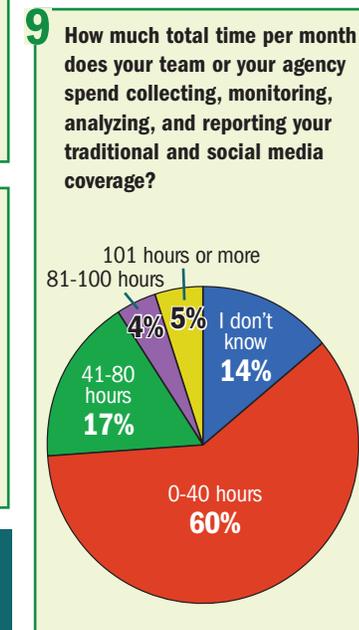
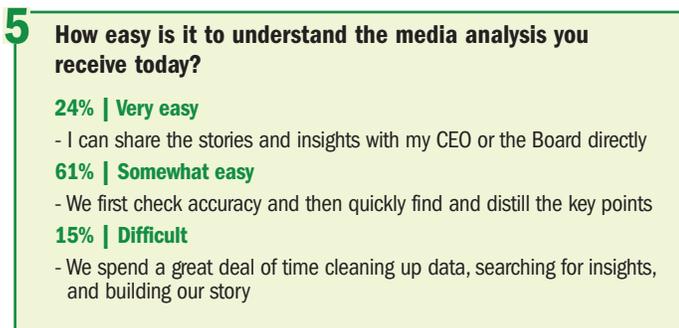
7 Please rank the following media analysis outputs by level of importance. (1 being high and 5 being low)

	1	2	3	4	5
Share of Voice versus that of competitors or peers	31%	25%	17%	14%	14%
Authors or outlets that are not writing about us but are covering our peers or competitors	19%	32%	22%	22%	5%
Uncovering industry influencers (pundits, academics, regulators, etc.)	33%	19%	23%	11%	14%
How my traditional media is being shared across social media	31%	27%	22%	22%	47%
Sentiment for my brand or reputation drivers (concepts - not keywords)	29%	34%	12%	15%	10%
Accurate intelligence that I can quickly share with my CEO or Board	39%	22%	20%	10%	8%



8 Please rank the following media analysis outputs by how you are executing these today. (1 being very well and 5 being poorly)

	1	2	3	4	5
Share of Voice versus that of competitors or peers	17%	32%	37%	5%	8%
Authors or outlets that are not writing about us but are covering our peers or competitors	12%	24%	32%	20%	12%
Uncovering industry influencers (pundits, academics, regulators, etc.)	15%	32%	25%	20%	7%
How my traditional media is being shared across social media	15%	38%	22%	17%	7%
Sentiment for my brand or reputation drivers (concepts - not keywords)	12%	19%	39%	24%	7%
Accurate intelligence that I can quickly share with my CEO or Board	16%	21%	42%	18%	4%



Source: PublicRelay and PR News, communications professionals, VP level and higher, including C-suite titles, November 2017



Barri Rafferty, CEO, (right) and Rob Flaherty, Chairman, Ketchum



1. The L Word: That the #metoo movement continues should be of little surprise. While some argue that it's impossible for brands to know what their employees are doing all the time, the people in the #metoo cases are not garden-variety employees, they're superstars. Some of these superstars (see **Weinstein, Harvey** and **O'Reilly, Bill**) reportedly had contracts acknowledging and making provisions for their misdeeds. (Yes, O'Reilly's situation came to a head well before #metoo, but the point holds.) In cases where the superstars lacked contracts that allowed them to cheat proper behavior, their misdeeds were common knowledge. **Charlie Rose's** longtime executive producer **Yvette Vega** admits she should have done something after being told repeatedly of the southern gentleman's un-gentlemanly behavior toward young women seeking employment at his **PBS** show. "I should have stood up for them. I failed. It is crushing. I deeply regret not helping them," she told the *Washington Post*. As of this writing, the two latest #metoo subjects are prominent New Yorkers with surnames beginning with L: *Today Show* co-anchor **Matt Lauer** and *Metropolitan Opera* conductor **James Levine**. We won't spill more ink recalling Lauer's case details. By contrast Levine, a classical music giant, has received relatively little coverage. His alleged misdeeds with at least one underage boy are not news to his employer. The Met failed to investigate a formal charge against the maestro in October 2016. When #metoo reports about Levine surfaced Dec. 3, 2017, the Met acknowledged the

2016 charge, filed in suburban Chicago. At the time, the Met says, it questioned Maestro Levine about the charges; he denied them. Case closed, until now, of course. The Met began its own investigation Dec. 4, 2017. As we write, 3 more men have come forward with similar allegations. Multiple organizations, including the Met, suspended their relationships with Levine Dec. 4. Levine had a 40-year relationship with the world-famous opera house. Clearly, the Met knew of at least the one allegation against Levine. As of this writing, reports had other allegations reaching the Met prior to this year. The to-do list for organizations caught in #metoo's wake includes telling the truth about what they knew and when; and insuring they implement policies to make sure sexual incidents are handled promptly. Get ready, communicators.

2. Growth: Public Relations Global Network, the international network of independent PR agencies, marked its 25th anniversary by adding to its roster. Now at 51 agencies, the additions are **Another Company** of Mexico; **Perspective Strategies** of Malaysia; and **Smart-PR** of Brazil. – **Sprout Social** acquired social analytics firm **Simply Measured** Dec. 5. Financial terms were not disclosed nor were the futures of Simply Measured employees and managers.

3. People: Ketchum partner and president **Barri Rafferty** was named CEO, effective Jan. 1. She becomes the first woman to lead a top five PR agency. Chairman/CEO **Rob Flaherty** will continue as chairman. A newly minted PRN Hall of Famer, Rafferty joined Ketchum in 1994. She was named global president in 2016. – Veteran cable PR exec and *PR News* favorite **Theano Apostolou** is leaving her position as EVP, communications at **Starz** after 7 years. Apostolou was one of president/CEO **Chris Albrecht's** early hires and part of his core executive team. Apostolou will continue to consult at Starz until her replacement

is found. She joined Starz in 2011 as SVP, communications, and was promoted in 2013. Prior to Starz, she was SVP of publicity, talent relations and promotional events at **AMC**, where she shaped PR for series including *Mad Men*, *Breaking Bad* and *The Walking Dead*. The awards campaigns she led at AMC garnered 23 Emmys and four Golden Globes. – **Zing-PR** is expanding into Hawaii and has lured Hawaii resident **Shirley Gines** back from Silicon Valley to head the agency's technology marketing practice in Honolulu. – **Achilleas Georgiou** was named head of communications at the **International Marine Contractors Association (IMCA)**. He'll report to IMCA chief **Allen Leatt**. Georgiou joins from **Amec Foster Wheeler**. – **French/West/Vaughan (FWV)** named **Kristen Lueck** director, influencer marketing. Lueck comes to FWV from **Golin**, where she helped build **McDonald's** Brand Newsroom. **Nothailah Meehan** joined FWV as director, media. Previously she was with **Ketchum South**. In addition FWV promoted **Abigail Quesinberry** to director, social media. – Women's athletic apparel brand **GRACEDBYGRIT** named **Danielle York** head of brand, marketing and PR activities. Most recently, York served as U.S. Western Region COO for **Edelman**. – Congrats to **Peter Intermaggio**, SVP, brand marketing & communications, **Comcast**, for receiving the Grand TAM from **CTAM**, cable's marketing association. Kudos also to: **Catherine Frymark**, SVP, corporate communications, **Discovery Communications**; **Michael Gnojewski**, senior director, marketing, **Viacom**; and **Mary Savery**, director of marketing, business services, **Cable ONE**, who received TAM honors.



Nothailah Meehan, Director, Media, FWV