



State of The PR Industry Report: A Look Back at 2021

Interested In What Your Peers And Executives Think When It Comes To The Key PR Questions? Read On!

Most of Onclusive's customers know us for our unique and unexpected insights from comprehensive media monitoring and PR Attribution™—but did you know that we also survey the industry's most experienced communicators and business executives during our live webinars?

That's right! Onclusive hosted a series of webinars in 2021 during which we asked our audience to participate in live polls. These poll results are a strong representation of the industry, as our webinars attract thousands of communications professionals worldwide. So we are sharing this data, which you won't find anywhere else.

As we look back at 2021, here is a summary of the insights we collected this year, based on the polls we conducted during our webinars. The poll respondents include in-house communicators and PR teams from companies of all sizes, large and boutique PR agencies, freelance PR professionals, and the C-suite.

This is an excellent opportunity to learn about the opinions, practices and realities of your industry peers and senior-level executives. Inside, you'll also find the links to each webinar recording, which you can watch on demand at your convenience.

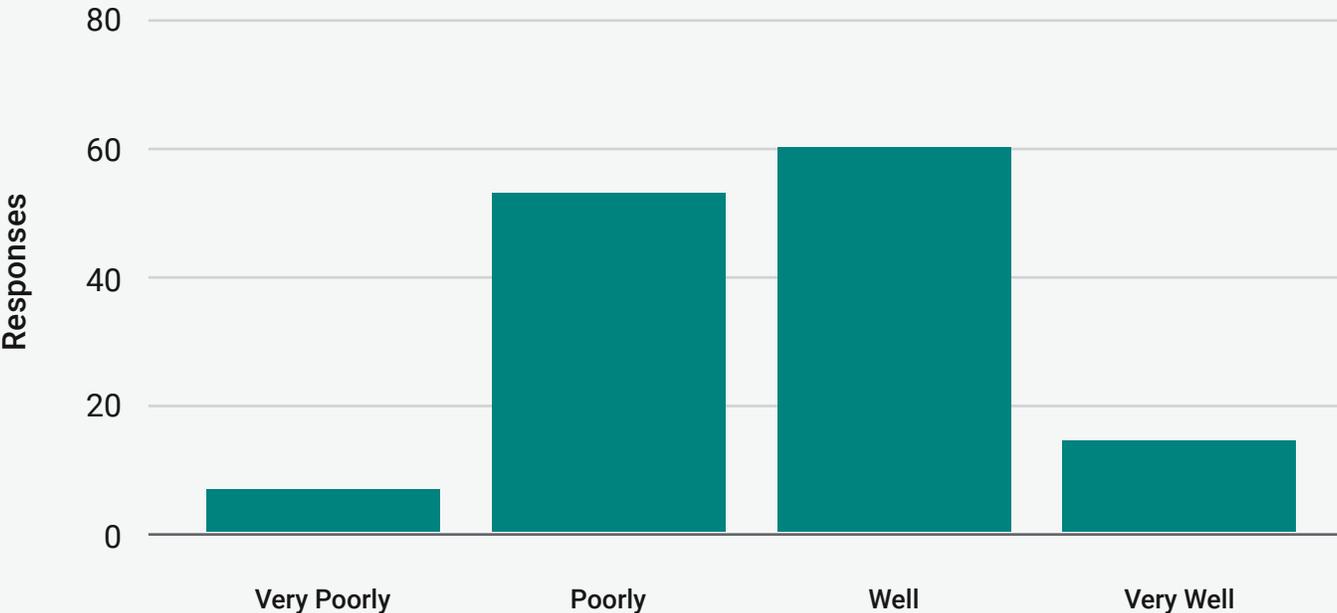
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How Well Does Your Executive Team Understand How To Leverage PR?

During January’s [The Executive’s Guide to Building & Leading an Impactful Communications Team](#) webinar, we hit the nail on the head by asking our participants to share how well they thought their C-suite knows how to empower and sees the value of their public relations team. The responses weren’t too surprising—56% thought the executive team understood this “well” or “very well”, and 44% rated it “poorly” or “very poorly”. It’s clear that the industry is divided, and more effort is needed on behalf of the communications industry to educate executives about the purpose, power and role of PR in their organizations.

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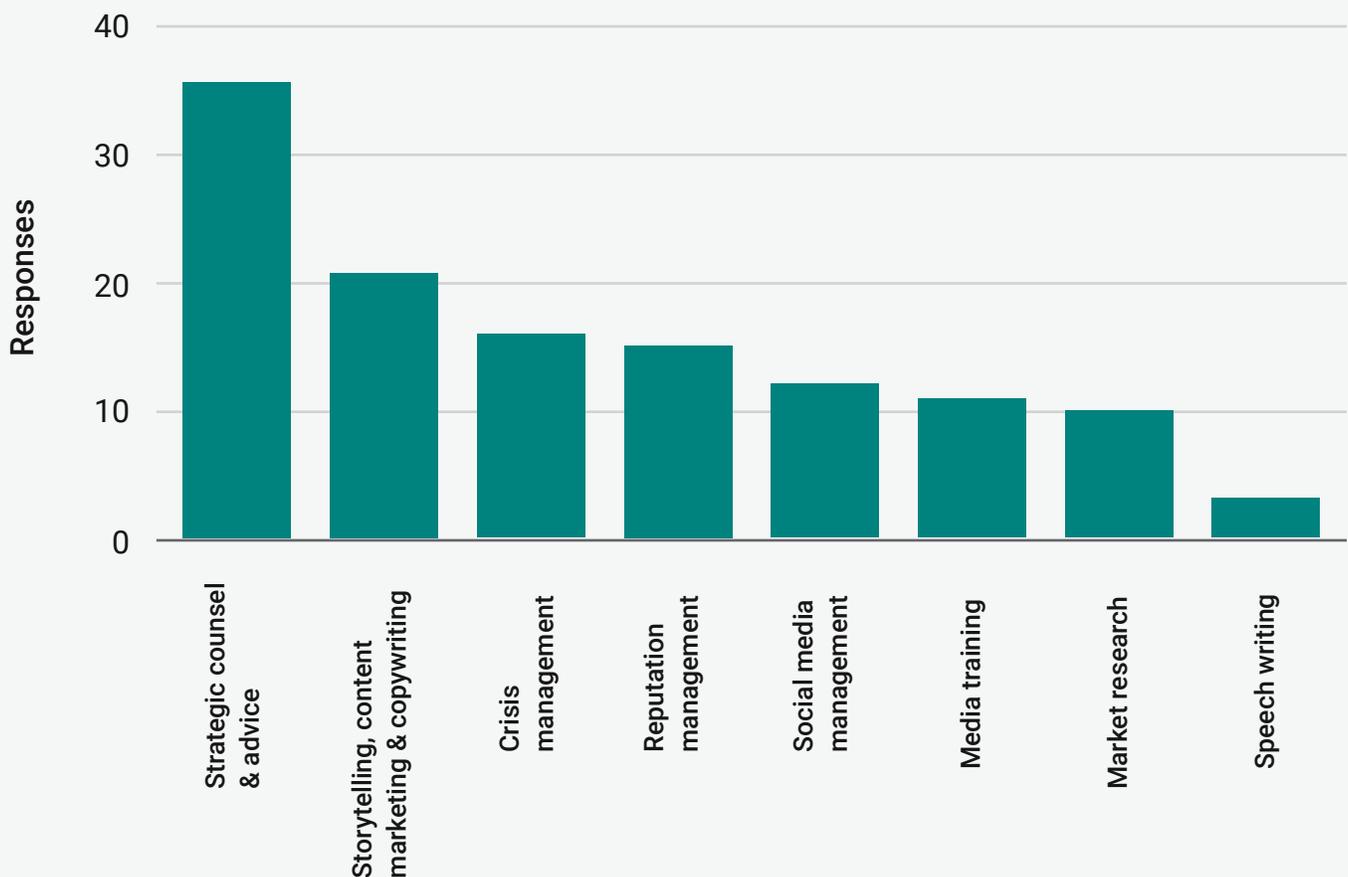


Which PR Agency Services Are Most Relevant To Your Business' Primary Needs?

The relationship between in-house communicators and external PR agencies is a critical piece of the puzzle, and during February's [The Complete Guide to Building an Impactful Relationship with your PR Agency](#) event we posed this question to find out which PR services are prioritized when companies are seeking a PR agency.

Here, we had some interesting discoveries—the majority of our respondents (28%) thought that it was most important to get quality strategic counsel and advice from their agency, followed by storytelling, content marketing and copywriting (17%), crisis management (12%) and reputation management (11%), with social media management and media training not far behind (10%). In summary, both strategic savvy and tactical expertise make a difference when it comes to selecting the right PR agency for your brand.

Which PR Agency Services Are Most Relevant To Your Business' Primary Needs?



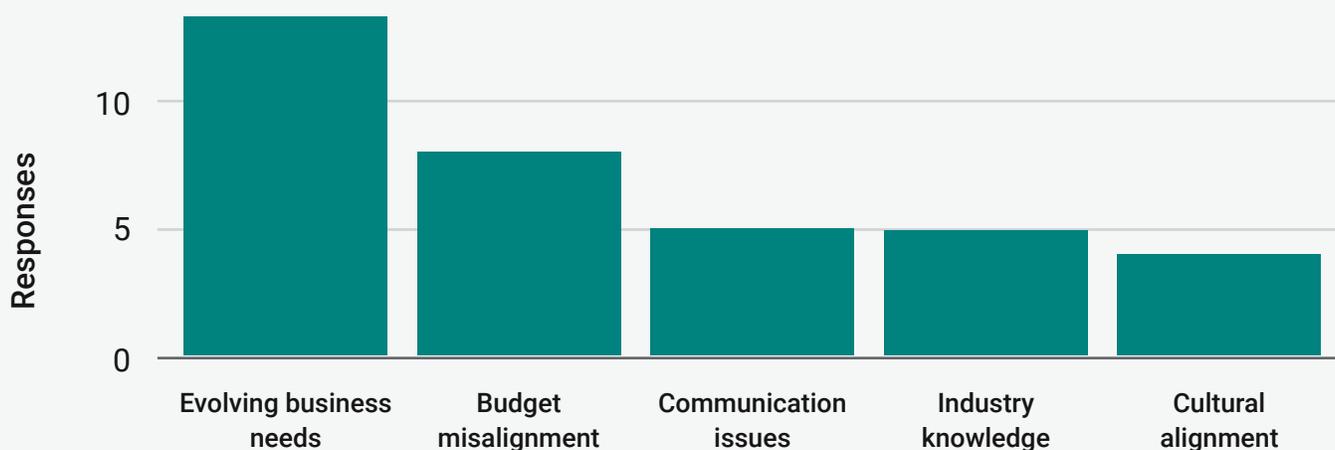
Note: The numbers above represent the count of responses, not individuals, as participants were able to select more than one answer.

What's Been The Biggest Challenge In Building A PR Agency / Brand Relationship?

In the same PR agency focused webinar, we were also curious about the biggest challenges our in-house communicators and agencies alike have been facing in their brand-agency relationships. With 35%, evolving business needs rocked the boat the most and budget misalignment was a close second (24%), followed by communications issues and industry knowledge (15% each), and finally, cultural alignment (12%).

Our takeaway is that it's critical for PR agencies to keep a close eye on their customers' organizational changes, have transparent conversations about the budget, and be creative around meeting these needs.

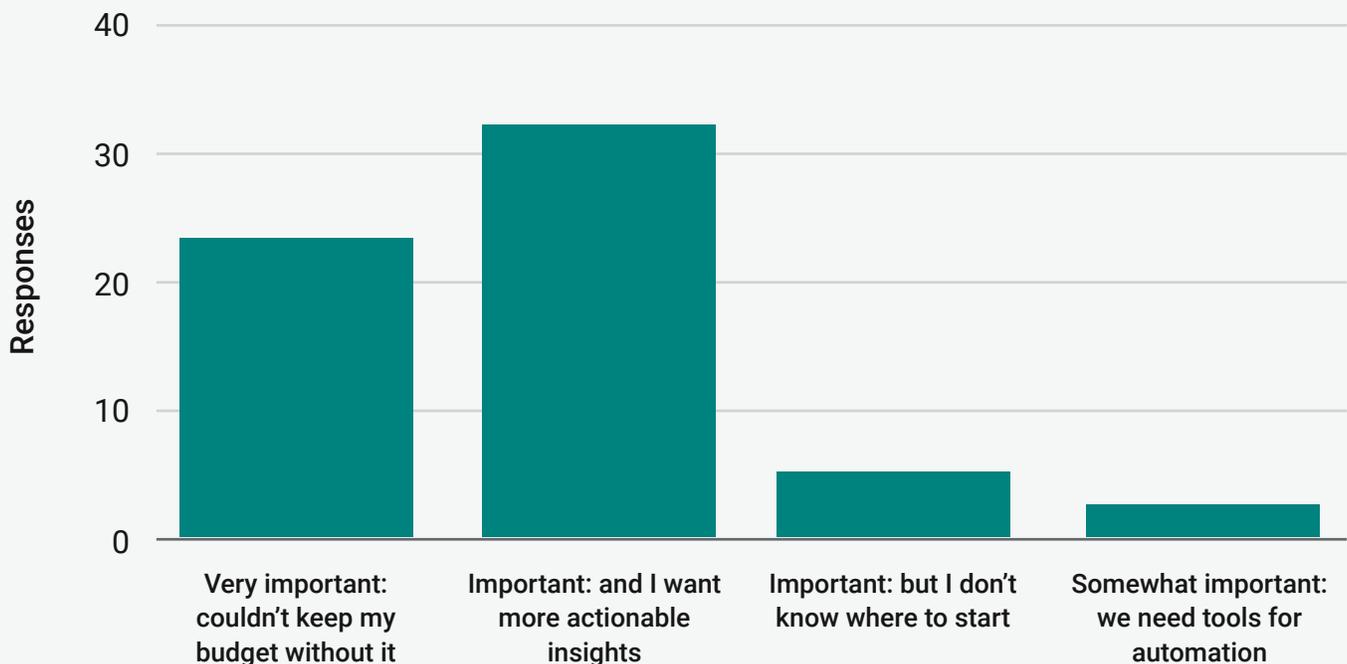
What's Been The Biggest Challenge In Building A PR Agency / Brand Relationship?



How Important Is Your PR Measurement Strategy To Making Sure That Your Work In Not Overlooked?

Our March webinar, [The Growth PR Playbook](#), introduced the concept of Growth PR, which connects PR to business growth. We wanted to know the importance of PR measurement in communications strategy, and it turns out that it has become a must in our industry. Almost all participants deemed measurement strategy as either very important (38%), especially when it comes to the budget, or important and wanting more actionable insights (50%).

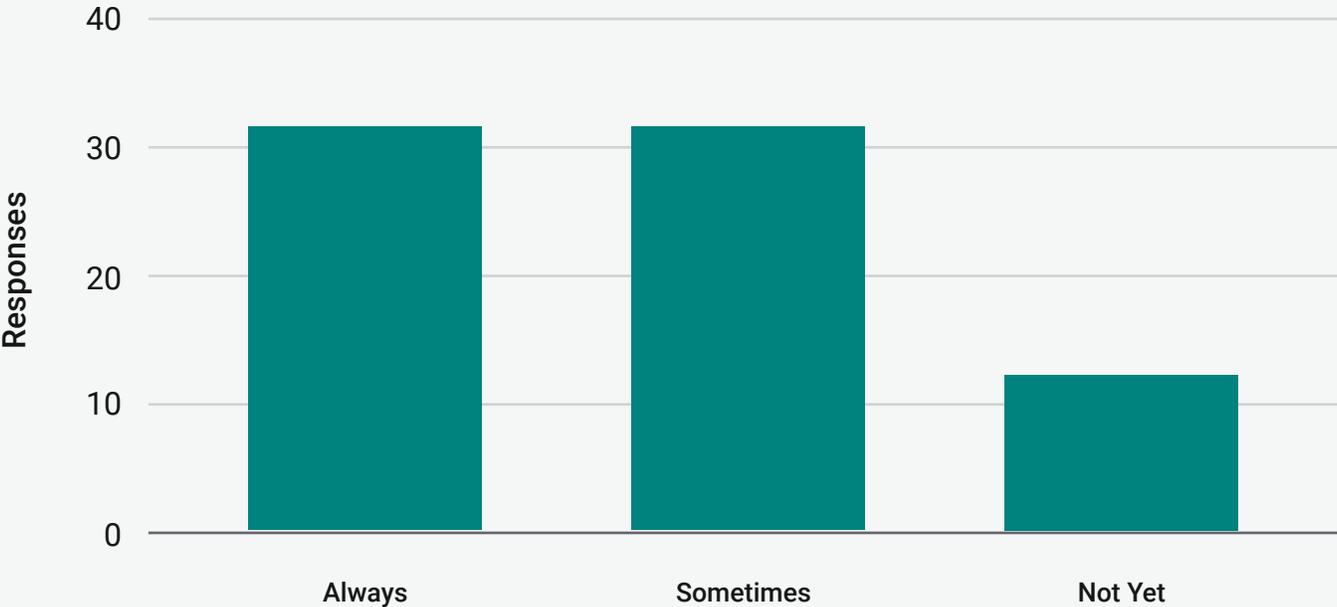
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Do You Create Strategic Communications Plans For Your PR Campaigns?

Switching gears to [PR Campaign Planning: Why Analytics is Key to Success](#) in our June webinar, we were curious about the industry's PR campaign planning practices. The vast majority of our respondents said that they use strategic planning for their campaigns either all the time (42%) or at least sometimes (42%), leaving 16% of those who haven't yet adopted this practice. Our takeaway is that campaign planning is one of the best practices in communications and PR, just as it has been for marketing over the last few decades.

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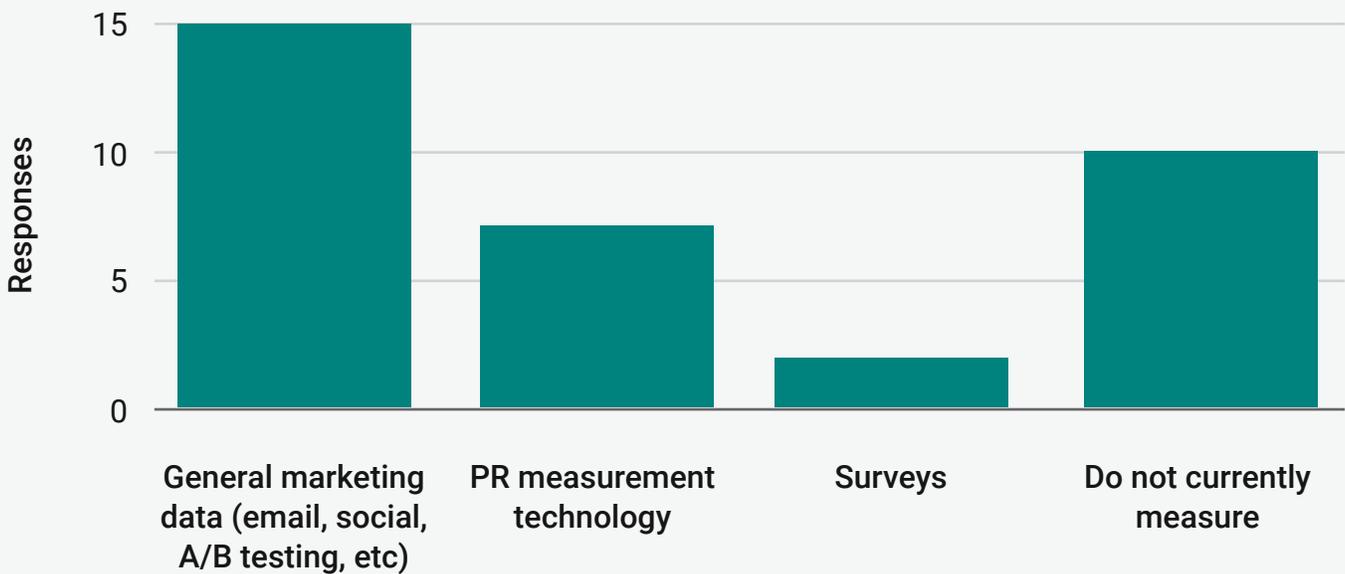


How Do You Measure Which Of Your Messages Are Working And Which Aren't?

Our next webinar, which we hosted in July, discussed [How to Optimize Messaging & Soundbites To Drive Success](#), and our key question to the audience was about measuring the effectiveness of specific messaging.

While the top response was what we expected—44% of participants said that they measure their messaging based on general marketing data, such as email and social metrics or A/B testing—a whopping 29% confessed that they do not currently measure it at all. PR measurement technology came to the rescue for 21%. If you're not sure how technology can help you gauge which messages are working and which aren't, check out Onclusive's [message optimization tools](#), which help you optimize your soundbites all the way to the bottom-line impact.

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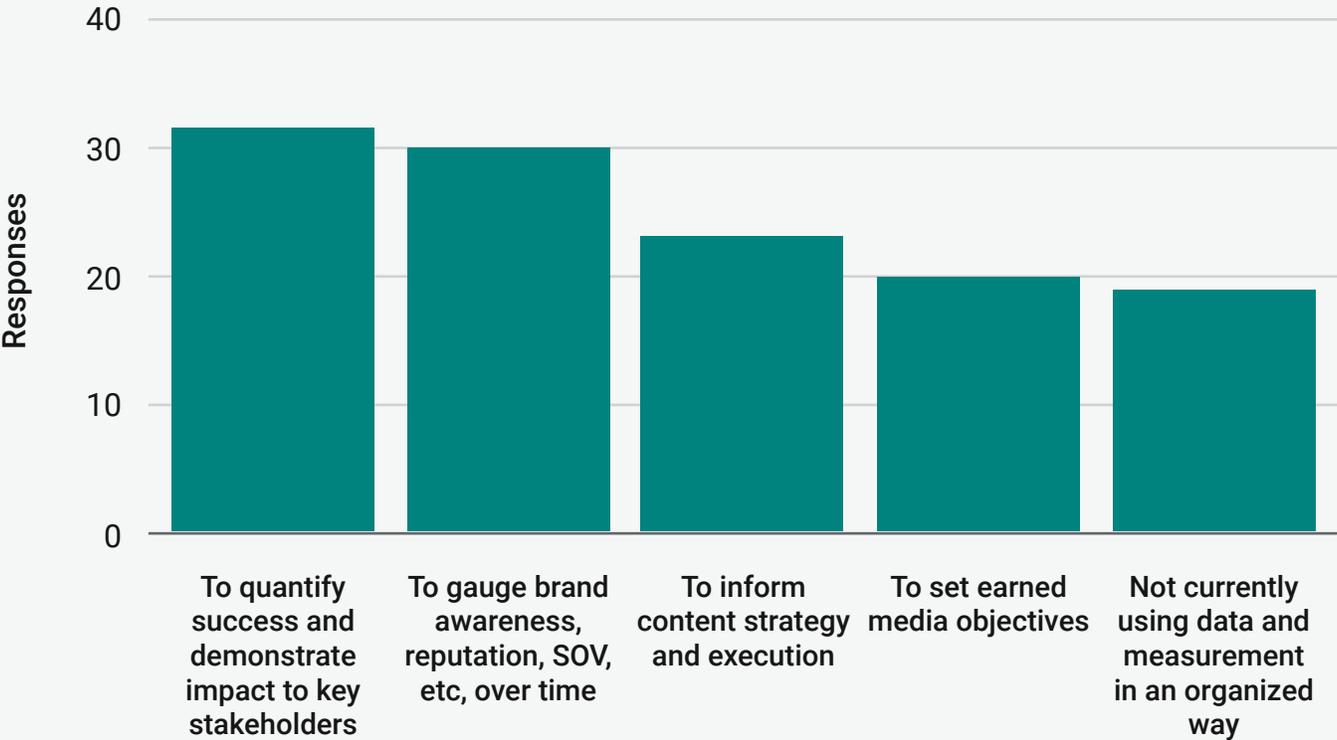
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How Do You Use Data And Measurement To Inform And Shape Your Earned Media Strategy?

Our September webinar, [The Ultimate Guide to Earned Media Strategy & Measurement](#), carried on the measurement theme with the focus on earned media. We asked the participants to share how they use data and measurement for strategic communications planning. Quantifying success (25%) and gauging brand awareness and reputation (24%) tied at the top, followed by informing content strategy (19%) and setting objectives (16%). In addition, some 15% of our audience said that they were not using data and measurement in an organized way.

Overall, we saw that communicators are avid users of data and measurement for various purposes, but mostly to demonstrate impact and track PR KPIs (key performance indicators).

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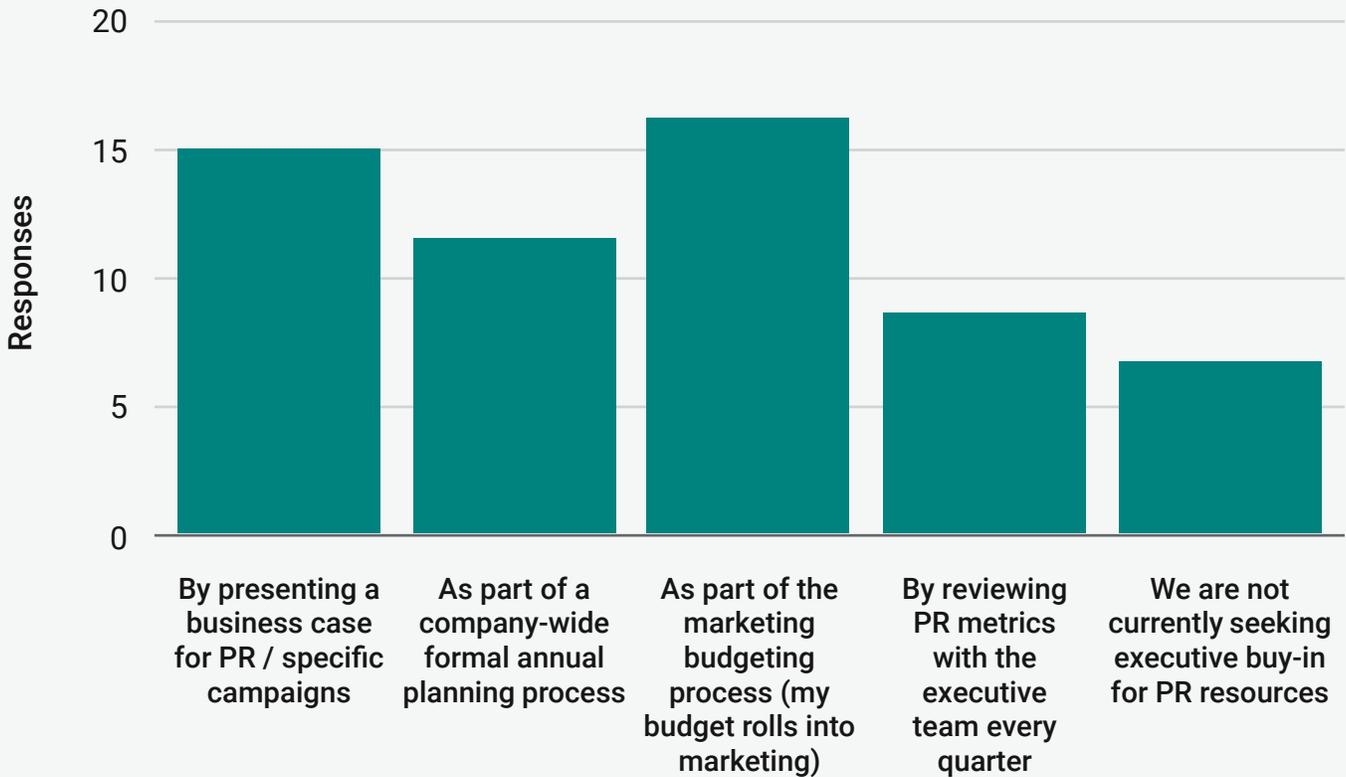
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How Do You Currently Get Executive Buy-In For Investment In PR And Communications?

In October, we focused on an interesting new topic—[How to Build a PR Business Case and Secure the Investment](#)—and we wanted to know how communications pros get executive approval for their PR budgets. What we found was that making a business case for PR and specific campaigns is actually no stranger to 27% of participants, while 25% present their arguments for resources and budget during the annual planning process. Another 20% said that they get their budget as part of the marketing budgeting process, and 15% review their PR metrics and results with the C-suite every quarter.

If you have not yet used a [business case template to secure your PR investment](#), take a look at the one Onclusive put together to help communicators with this process.

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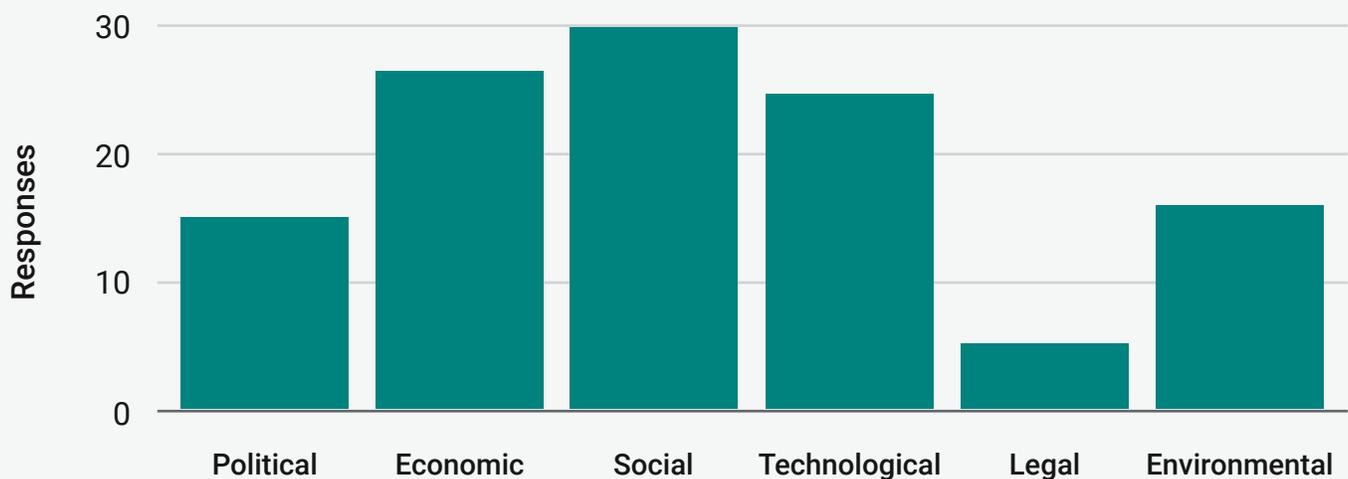


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Which PESTLE (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, Environmental) Categories Are The Most Important Ones For Your Brand?

Finally, in November we talked about [Managing Corporate Reputation with PESTLE Analysis](#). This tool, which is similar to ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance), can serve as an essential indicator of brand health and perception. Different PESTLE categories have different levels of importance depending on the industry and type of business, and our audience told us that they most care about the social factors (25%), followed by economic (23%) and technological (22%) factors. Environmental and political factors trailed at 15% each.

Which PESTLE Categories Are The Most Important Ones For Your Brand?



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If you have requests for future topics that you'd like us to discuss in our webinars or digital content, please let us know! Email your ideas to us at info@onclusive.com.

Onclusive

Onclusive empowers the world's leading brands and agencies to modernize communications, increase performance, and demonstrate value. The inventors of **PR Attribution™** and **Power of Voice™**, Onclusive measures the true impact of content on a company's bottom line. Manage the entire PR workflow and pitch, monitor and showcase success with Onclusive's integrated product suite.

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