

# 2021 State of the Media and Journalism Report + Flying Embers with Guest Trifecta Lexie Smith (Your Host!)

## SPEAKERS

Lexie Smith

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Hey guys, Lexie here, travel enthusiast, lover of puns, pizza and wine connoisseur and founder of THEPRBAR inc., and you're tuning in to the Pitchin' and Sippin' Podcast, from behind the scenes interviews with the media to honest conversations with other PR pros, to a look at inspiring brands and entrepreneurs that are rocking the world of PR. In this podcast, we talk tips while taking sips, and talking about all the things that make those in the world of PR tick. Let's get started. Hello, everybody, we're officially wrapping up Season One of the Pitchin' and Sippin' Podcast, which is crazy. And in honor of such we're doing something a little bit different today. I'm actually solo recording, and I've decided to give you a quick rundown of the state of the media in 2021. Every year I look forward to receiving the latest and greatest industry stats. The two reports that I consistently referenced the most are produced by Muck Rack and Cision. So first up, we're going to review Muck Rack "The State of Journalism 2021" study and report. For those of you who don't know, Muck Rack is a popular PR software platform, I pulled the next line from their website. Their mission is to enable organizations to communicate effectively by creating the best PR software platform. Okay, so let's dive into some of the numbers. First a bit about who was interviewed. In this study, 2,482 journalists were surveyed in the making of this report between January and February of this year. 62% are full time editorial writers or bloggers, 19% are freelance journalists, 12% are part time journalists, and 7% selected 'other' with the top reasons being retirement and unemployment. Of those 30% primarily report in print, 42% were online only, 10% tv, 8% Radio, 2% newsletter, and 1% podcast. 3% said it was too difficult to choose a single medium. Okay, so let's go into section one of the report which covered social media news consumption and reporting. Question one, when asked how much of your reporting would you estimate has pivoted to angles related to covid 19. The surveyed journalists answered: 4% said all, 39% said most, 51% said some, and 6% said none. When asked in general, where do you go first for your news 58% of journalists get their news from online newspapers or magazines, 16% said Twitter. Okay, so this next one I think is a big one. When asked who they consider to be credible sources for their reporting, they responded saying: 86% said academic subject matter experts. That was number one. So 86% was academic subject matter experts. Second place at 74% CEOs. So for those of you wondering if as a CEO or founder you can pitch yourself there you go. 55% company PR professionals, 34% agency PR professionals, which was interesting to see, 13% said bloggers, 12% said social media personalities, 12% said celebrity spokespeople, 11% said self appointed subject matter experts, and 5% said none of the above. So again, the vast majority of journalists found that academic subject

matter experts and CEOs are the most credible sources for reporting and significantly more journalists find that PR professionals to be credible when they work within a company rather than an agency which is interesting. I don't know if that's fair, but that's what the numbers are telling us. Next question. They were asked which social network is most valuable to you as a journalist. 76% said Twitter, so Twitter still number one, second place at 38% was Facebook, 23% LinkedIn, 15% Instagram, 12% YouTube, 7% Reddit, and 2% TikTok. I thought this next one was super interesting as well. When reporting on a company, I consult the company social media. So that was more of a statement. Right. So what what amount of journalists resonated with the statement: When reporting on a company, I consult the company's social media. 6% said never, 8% said rarely, 28% said sometimes, 45% said usually, and 13% said always, so at 45% of journalists saying they do look at a company social media platform, you know, pretty much points in the direction of social media being important for PR and the media. Okay, so 62% of journalists said that they do keep track of how many times their stories are shared on social media. And to quickly reference back to Episode 12 of this podcast with Bri Amaranthus from Sports Illustrated, she actually mentioned part of her pay or commission is based on sharing metrics. So on that note, when asked what makes a story more shareable in their opinion, 70% said that the subject was connected to a trending story, 64% says that it contains an image or infographic, 59% said that it's an exclusive or somehow is surprising data, 54% said it's easily localized or made relevant to their target audience, 24% said contains video, 20% said brevity, 9% said quotes from a company spokesperson. So again, those are the elements that they believe make a story more shareable. Okay, so section two of the report looked at media relations in 2021, specifically, pitching preferences. And I love this one, because anytime I have a member of the media on my show, I like to end the episode by asking them their personal pitching preferences. So let's see what the report said. So this one was a bit harsh, in my opinion, but you know, interesting to learn. So when asked how they view their relationship with PR teams and PR agencies 6%, only 6%, of journalists see their relationship with PR pros as a partnership, 17% view it as a necessary evil, again, a little harsh there, 18% describe it as antagonistic, and 59% describe it as mutually beneficial, but not quite a partnership. So I would say generally speaking, all the members of the media on my show and in my Rolodex, you know, would view it in that either 6% as a partnership or the 59%, so that's positive. Okay, why do you immediately reject otherwise relevant pitches? 21% said lack of personalization, 15% said it's too lengthy, 3% contains large attachments, 25% said bad timing, and 12% set of confusing subject line. We had 25% say 'other' and other consisted mostly of people who wrote an answers like irrelevant, random or not localized, which, you know, could be considered lack of personalization. So if we add the 25% to the 21%, then lack of personalization is in first place. And bad timing comes in second. Which channel do they prefer to be pitched? 94% said email, so email is still top dog. What day of the week did they want to receive pitches? 57% said Monday, 20% said Tuesday, 5% said Wednesday, 4% said Thursday, 1% said Saturday, 6% said Sunday. So first place Monday second place Tuesday. I will say though it's interesting because I asked this question to most of the journalists on my show. And they generally don't have a preference. So a little bit of food for thought there. I usually on a personal note, go for Tuesday because I also know that while it's the preferred day, they're being inundated the most on Mondays. So in my career I've seen usually the most success on Tuesdays. But you know if you can listen to an episode in this podcast of journalists you're looking to pitch they'll literally tell you their preference. Okay, when is the best time of day to receive a pitch? 68% of journalists prefer to receive pitches between 5am and 12pm Eastern Standard Time. I'm on the West Coast so did a little bit of math and that's around 8am to 3pm PST. 91% of journalists prefer pitches under 200 words. Right. So

brevity again, and then follow ups, how many follow ups is acceptable? 90% of journalists say it's okay to send at least one follow up email, 38% say two or more. Again, this is another question I asked the journalists on the show. So look back to the library and you can always hear their personal preferences. Okay, one last question. I want to review from Muck Rack's report, and then we're going to head on over to Cision. How long after an initial email, is it okay to follow up? 86% of journalists are okay with a follow up email within one week of the initial message, the other 14% prefer a follow up over one week from the initial pitch.

Hey, guys, Lexie here interrupting the show really quick to drop a note. To celebrate the wrap up of season one, I have a present for all of my wonderful listeners. That's you guys. I want to give you my personal Pitch it, Pitch it Good! Checklist, which outlines the things you must do before you press send on a pitch ever to snag it. All you have to do is visit [theprbarinc.com/pitchitgood](https://theprbarinc.com/pitchitgood). Check the show notes for spelling. Alright, I'm done back to the show.

Okay, now we're going to go into Cision's 2021 Global State of the Media Report. Cision is a leading global provider of software that empowers marketing communications professionals to identify key influencers, craft and distribute strategic content and measure meaningful impact. And no, they did not sponsor this show, I just like giving credit where credit's due. Okay, so for their report, they surveyed more than 2,700 journalists in 15 countries across the globe from February to March of this year, we're actually going to start with some qualitative data. So journalists were asked what was their biggest challenge for journalism in 2020. Now, here are their responses in their own words, first journalist said they need to provide constant COVID-19 news coverage at the expense of other topics, next, maintaining mental health and well being while still being productive and functional during a pandemic, next, staffing and declining ad revenue. And then the last one, I wanted to share, quote, proving the value of good journalism to the general public, and why they should pay for it. To wrap that up with a number more than half, so 53% of journalists feel the public lost trust in the media over the last year. Now, when asked what they're looking for story wise in 2021, 45.5% said they're still looking for new angles related to COVID-19 coverage, 36.5% are looking for, quote, feel good stories on how companies and communities are helping others, 33.3% said they're looking for stories on furthering diversity, inclusion and equity, 32.3% said they're looking for stories on how companies and communities are getting back to normal, 30.5% are looking for stories on new technologies that are helping businesses and consumers, and then 29.4% are looking for more research based thought leadership content, covering topical issues. So one kind of extra note that I wanted to add in I'm sure this largely differs and depends on the given beat. I don't have a list of all the beats that these journalists were covering and quick reminder a beat as a topic. So you know, you can write for the technology beat. You can write for the fashion beat, etc. Here is a key takeaway from the report: journalists are inundated with spam. 53% of journalists received more than 50 pitches a week, and 28% received more than 100 per week. Yet the vast majority of journalists at 69% say that only a quarter or less of the pitches they receive are relevant to their audiences. The takeaway? Be part of the solution. Make sure your pitch is relevant to the journalists you are reaching out to and be clear as to why. One journalist said quote, I'm absolutely choked with news a pitch needs to be really good and must fit our mission, readership and model. Next up Cision rallied seven ways to help journalists help you. Number one, do your homework. I preach this all the time. By the way. So for 61% of journalists one of the biggest ways PR people can help them and themselves is by understanding their target audience and

what's relevant. I just want to like snap snap snap to that such a big point. Number two, be a trendspotter, so stay up to date on the latest trends. Number three, time it right, so Monday still comes up on top in their report as the preferred day to pitch followed by Tuesday in second place. Next up, give them time before following up. Many journalists want two to three days or even longer to look over a pitch before someone follows up with them. And actually, they gave us a helpful time. 28.2% said they prefer to be followed up between the hours of 10am and noon. Next step, plan ahead. Over 1/3 of journalists, so 35% would like to see a list of stories you have planned in advance. 33% of journalists plan their stories in real time throughout the day, and one in four plan their stories a week ahead. 18% only plan a month ahead. Next tip, get graphic, provide journalists with multimedia elements. Images specifically are by far the most preferred at 81.7%. And second place at 44.6% is videos. And the last little tip here was give them what they want, what they really, really want. When asked what type of content they want to receive from brands and organizations, the vast majority of journalists, 78% to be specific, want news announcements and press releases, which is also the source of content journalists said they find most useful. More than two thirds, 68%, want original research reports, such as trends and market data, 45% want invitations to events, and 43% want initial ideas for story development. So just to kind of recap, give them what they want. What do they want? First place, news announcements and press releases. Second place, original research reports. Third place, they want invites to events. And then the last place at 43% was initial ideas for story development. Okay, when asked what would make you block a person or put them on your don't call list? How did they answer? I need to pause because this is so timely. My last Episode, Episode 27 with Brittany Mobley of Culturit PR talks on getting blacklisted, so if this is a topic that interests you go one episode back and give it a listen. Okay, so here is what citizens report said what makes a PR person or someone pitching get blocked: 73% said if they're getting spammed with irrelevant pitches, A.K.A. do your homework underline bolt, exclamation point. I... that's you know editorializing there for me, okay. 51.7% will blacklist someone for following up with them repeatedly. So you know, don't be annoying. 51.3% said providing inaccurate or unsourced information. 50.6% said pitches that sound like marketing brochures I come across this quite a lot, right? Marketing speak and PR speak are different. Remember, at the core of your pitch, it's how are you serving the audience, this isn't an opportunity to just talk about how awesome you are. Save that for your marketing. And then the last one, actually, I'm gonna share two more, 46.1% dodging inquiries or lack of transparency will get you blacklisted. And then the last one, canceling last minute. however, only 23.5% said that one and I thought it would be much higher because that's one of my personal biggest pet peeves in life. Okay, so top two things people pitching can do is provide a journalist with data and expert sources when they need them. So 65.6% of journalists said those are the two most important things, give them data, give them expert credible sources. 61.3% said understand my target audience and what they find relevant. Again, do your homework. So wrapping up the report now and I wanted to read a final line from their conclusion: as the media landscape continues to evolve, so do journalists' needs and expectations. But the fundamentals of thoughtful, targeted storytelling and follow-through will remain the same. Okay, so shout out again to Cision and Muck Rack for helping us get our numbers in order. You know, re listen to this back, feel free to tap forward. There's some really helpful stuff in here that allows us to go off of more than just gut instinct.

So we're gonna wrap up this episode in the same way we always do. We talked about pitching. Now let's talk about sippin'. Today I wanted to give a shout out to one of my favorite beverages, Flying Embers Seltzer again, no add here. This is like very genuine. So I fell in love with this beverage before I

ever realized how truly connected to it I am. So this company was literally born out of Ojai, California, which is basically my backyard here in Ventura. During a massive wildfire. They donate a portion of all proceeds to firefighter and first responders out of respect for their service to our community. Now aside from California, they have also donated proceeds to the small town of Talent, Oregon, that was devastated by the Alameda fire. Quick reminder, I'm from Oregon. So not only does this beverage absolutely make my tastebuds explode with happiness, I also feel a really really deep connection to its cause. It may or may not be available in a store near you just yet. So your best bet is to check out their website which is flyingembers.com again, I'll put that in the show notes. Also follow them on Instagram, they have a great Instagram. It's @flyingembersbrew. Shoot them a DM saying you heard about them on the show and I will love you forever. last note on them. My favorite flavor is guava jalapeno, so good. Okay guys. So while we're wrapping up Season IOne, I'm very excited to report that we're already knee deep and recording Season Two and the guest lineup is fire. To make sure you don't miss the first drop of season two, hit subscribe wherever you are listening and keep an eye out on my Instagram @theprbar\_inc. Also totally feel free to shoot me a message if you have any topic requests for Season Two, because this show is for you guys. And I want to make sure it's delivering as much value as humanly possible. With all of that said, you guys rock, keep pitching and sipping. Cheers. Hey guys, if you are enjoying the Pitchin' and Sippin' podcast, please do me a huge favor and leave a review wherever you are listening. If you want to connect with me to learn more about THEPRBAR inc., You can do so on Instagram @theprbar\_inc or you can check out my website at theprbarinc.com. Cheers