

New Research Shows Communication Executives and Media Relations Experts Confront Challenges Due to Shrinking Newsrooms and Disinformation

The Institute for Public Relations and Peppercomm interviewed CCOs and media relations experts to find out how they are navigating an evolving media landscape

New York, NY (Oct. 8, 2024) — Chief Communications Officers (CCOs) and media relations experts are grappling with shrinking newsrooms, disinformation, and a rapidly changing media landscape, according to a new report, [*“Navigating a Changing Media Landscape,”*](#) by the [Institute for Public Relations \(IPR\)](#) and communications and marketing agency [Peppercomm](#). The report features interviews with 22 Chief Communications Officers (CCOs) and 22 media relations experts who discuss the perspectives of their CEOs and Board of Directors (BODs) on strategies for combating misinformation and disinformation, approaches to measuring media relations efforts, and their outlook on the future of media.

"The media landscape is evolving at a pace we've never seen before, driven by shrinking newsrooms, the rise of disinformation, and the need for more agile communication strategies," said Tina McCorkindale, Ph.D., APR, President and CEO of the Institute for Public Relations. "CCOs and media relations experts must proactively manage these changes on behalf of their organizations."

Below are some **key findings** from the report:

- **Shrinking Newsrooms Pose Challenges:** Journalists are increasingly stretched thin, covering more stories across broader beats. This leads to less in-depth reporting and fewer opportunities for earned media, making it harder for organizations to secure meaningful coverage.
- **Increased Shift Toward Paid and Sponsored Content:** With traditional media opportunities declining, organizations are ramping up their investment in digital ads and paid content.
- **Mixed Adaptation to the Evolving Media Landscape:** While some CEOs and Board of Directors (BODs) are embracing new media strategies, others remain focused on traditional media tactics, resisting the need for innovation in their media relations approach. Most respondents indicated they are responsible for educating the C-suite and Board of Directors (BODs) on the evolving media landscape.

The report also explores how CCOs and media relations specialists envision the future of media relations over the next 18 months and five years, highlighting the growing challenges posed by increased disinformation, polarization, and the expanding role of AI in communication strategies.

"The role of media relations professionals is becoming increasingly complex as they work to navigate a landscape characterized by rapid technological advancements, particularly in AI, and growing media fragmentation," said Steve Cody, CEO of Peppercomm. "In order to not only survive but thrive in this environment, CCOs must prioritize ongoing education for both the C-suite and Board of Directors (BODs) and ensure their expectations are aligned."

Methodology

The Institute for Public Relations and Peppercomm conducted online, written interviews with 22 Chief Communication Officers (CCOs) from a wide range of industries and organizations and 22 media relations professionals from June to July 2024. The respondents' information has been white-labeled to protect confidentiality and offer an opportunity to provide candid responses.

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About IPR:

The Institute for Public Relations is an independent, nonprofit research foundation dedicated to fostering greater use of research and research-based knowledge in corporate communication and the public relations practice. IPR is dedicated to *the science beneath the art of public relations*.™ IPR provides timely insights and applied intelligence that professionals can put to immediate use. All research, including a weekly research letter, is available for free at instituteforpr.org.

About Peppercomm:

Peppercomm, a Ruder Finn company, is an award-winning, strategic, integrated communications and marketing agency headquartered in New York City with offices in San Francisco and London. With 29 years of expertise serving blue chip and breakout clients, the firm has made a science of communication, combining wit and wisdom with proven public relations discipline and innovative offerings to break through, build deeper connections and ensure our clients' success. Peppercomm has received numerous accolades throughout its history, most recently being named one of the top 30 Crain's Best Places to Work in NYC 2023, the *PRNews* Agency Elite 100 and *PR Daily's* Top Agencies, as well as recent campaign award recognitions from the *Provoke* SABRE Awards (Integrated Campaign), *PRNews* Platinum PR Awards (Media Relations), *PRNews* Digital Awards (CSR), and the *Bulldog* PR Awards (Media Relations), among others.