



2012 Blogger Survey

BBS COMMUNICATIONS GROUP

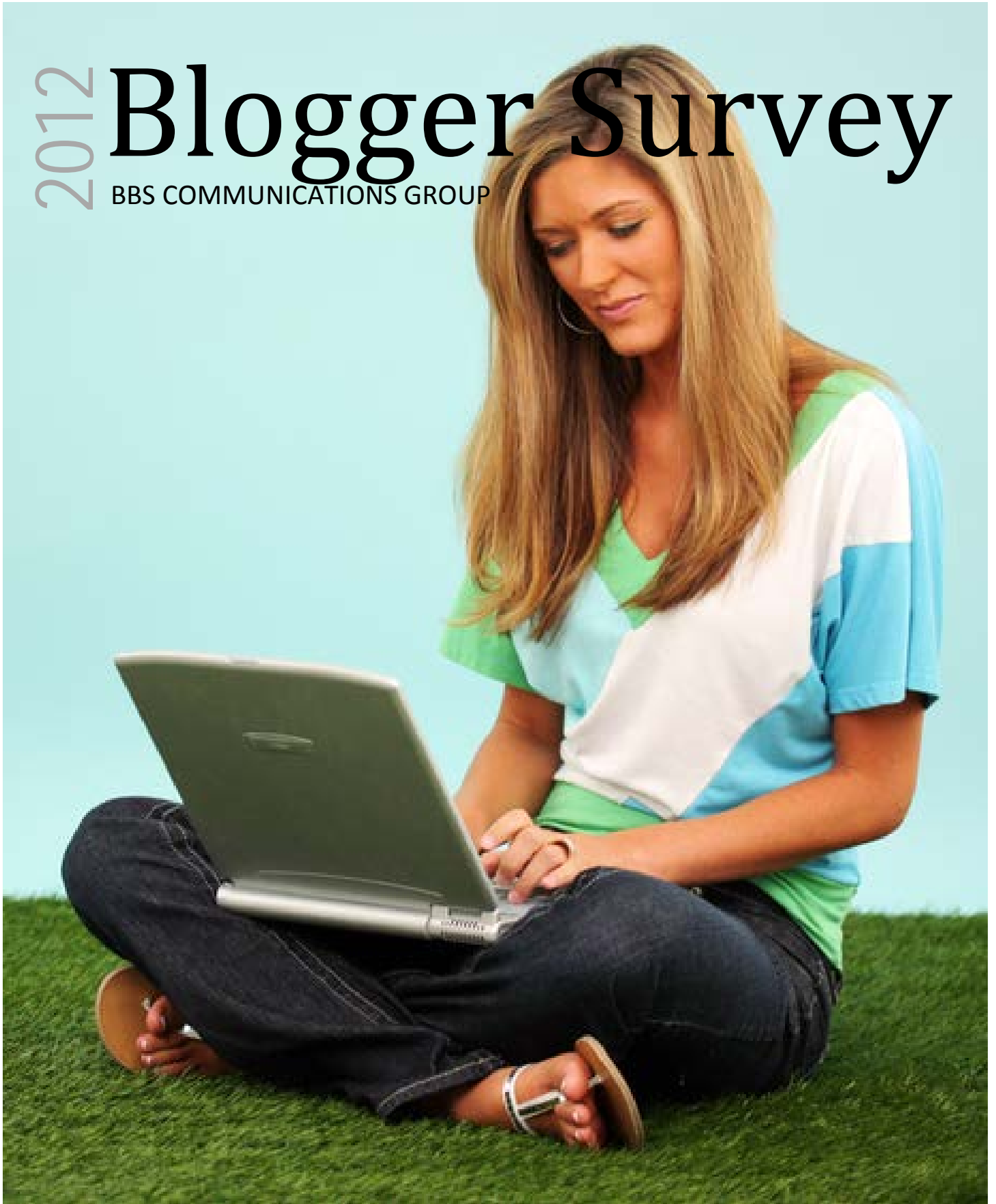


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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

BBS is a communications industry leader with an exceptional reputation for understanding the media and achieving success for clients wanting to secure media coverage – whether it's in traditional or new media.

The firm enjoys unparalleled relationships with journalists across the nation.

Since 2011, BBS has investigated the rise of the blogosphere and its convergence with the traditional media landscape through our blogger survey.

This year's survey of 47 bloggers sought to identify key blogging trends, including bloggers' levels of influence, professional drivers and experiences with organisations and public relations professionals.

KEY FINDINGS

BLOGGING IS A PROFESSION IN ITS OWN RIGHT

Since first emerging as an outlet for online journaling, blogging has evolved substantially into a professional tool, used by many writers to showcase their work, raise their profile, grow their readership and potentially generate income.

With one in ten respondents in this year's survey indicating that they blogged as a full time job and 66% reporting that they generated some kind of income from their blog, the professionalism of blogging is still increasing.

Interestingly, with an additional 20% blogging as part of a full time job, it would seem that blogging is being integrated into more traditional professions, perhaps as a personal or corporate profiling tool.

BLOGGING IS BOTH COLLABORATIVE AND COMPETITIVE

The blogging community has traditionally been collaborative in nature, with many bloggers sharing and promoting other bloggers' content. This year's survey identified that half of bloggers source information from other blogs, indicating that the community aspect of the blogosphere is alive and well.

However, many bloggers also indicated the growth of online and social media means that there is more competition for followers and readers, thus more demand for original content.

BLOGGERS UNDERSTAND THEIR VALUE TO BRANDS

With many blogs now generating advertising income, bloggers know that brands and companies are willing to pay to reach their readerships.

Subsequently, they understand their power and influence over readers and are unlikely to blatantly promote products, brands or organisations simply because they are requested to or to offer empty endorsements.

KEY FINDINGS

**THE PR WORLD HAS
TAKEN NOTICE OF BLOGGERS, IN A BIG
WAY**

The frequency with which PR professionals are contacting bloggers has increased immensely. Almost three quarters of respondents in this year's survey are being pitched ideas on a weekly basis, with only 6% having never received contact from a PR person (down from 26% in 2011).

What this tells us, is that the perceived value of bloggers is increasing across the board amongst businesses and PR machines, which increasingly see them as potential targets to raise the profile of their brands.

With a better equipped PR industry targeting bloggers on a regular basis, to ensure cut through, your pitch needs to stand out, be relevant and timely and promise interesting, insightful content.

**BLOGGERS WILL USE PR CONTENT BUT
NOT INDISCRIMINATELY**

Bloggers are open to engaging with brands, companies and PR professionals and using provided materials. In fact, 84% of those contacted had drawn content for their blog from ideas they had been pitched, up from 56% of 2011 participants.

However, bloggers will only consider PR pitches that are relevant, suit the spirit of their blogs and help to generate genuine, fresh and meaningful content for readers.

**BLOGGERS ARE DOING THEIR
RESEARCH AND FOLLOWING UP
INFORMATION**

Just like journalists, bloggers understand that editorial credibility and integrity are essential, particularly in their relationship with readers.

In their desire for fresh and accurate information, bloggers regularly research companies via their corporate websites, visiting news sections, media centres and looking for contact details for follow up.

For organisations, it is integral that websites are easy to navigate, contain up to date information and relevant resources, list relevant contact details and point to channels where new information is made available, such as social media accounts.

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KEY FINDINGS

FASHION AND RETAIL ARE ENGAGING BLOGGERS BEST

Overwhelmingly, the consumer-driven fashion and retail industries are leading the way in blogger engagement, according to survey respondents.

More than 43% of respondents identified the fashion industry as best understanding what bloggers want.

Companies in other sectors looking to better engage with bloggers should consider some of the engagement strategies employed by the fashion and retail industries and how they may be adapted within their industry.

Key suggestions for helping to boost blogger engagement include personalising pitches, seeding information with bloggers at the same time as key journalists, providing access to spokespeople and good imagery. A better understanding of web-based elements like SEO, analytics and ways that your content can help boost bloggers' web rankings would also be highly regarded.

THE SURVEY

THE QUESTIONS

1. Is blogging a full time job for you, or do you do it in addition to other paid work?
2. What is your age category?
3. Have you received any form of income from your blog during the past 12 months?
4. How many ideas do you receive each week for your blog? (including pitches, emails, phone calls and media releases)
5. How do you generate content for your blog?
6. What resources do you most commonly use on organisational websites to assist writing your blog?
7. What other resources would you like to see on an organisation's website to assist you in producing your blog?
8. How regularly are you contacted by PR professionals?
9. How often do you use content from a PR professional as the basis for your blog?
10. In your experience, what industry do you find is best at understanding bloggers' needs?
11. How has the rise of online and social media news affected your blog?
12. What are the top three things PR practitioners can do to assist you as a blogger?

Please note: some findings and statistics in the 2012 BBS Blogger Survey report are based on the total number of responses, rather than the total number of respondents.

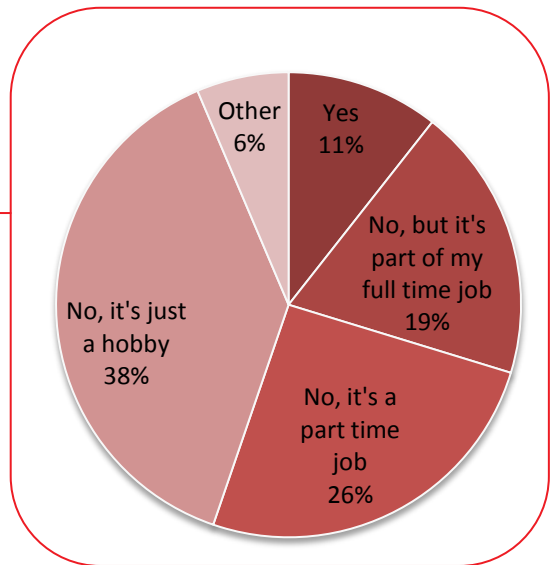
DETAILED FINDINGS

IS BLOGGING A FULL TIME JOB FOR YOU, OR DO YOU DO IT IN ADDITION TO OTHER PAID WORK?

Blogging is increasingly becoming a full-time or part-time job. Of the 47 bloggers surveyed, one in 10 blog as a full time job and another 19% blog as part of a full time job.

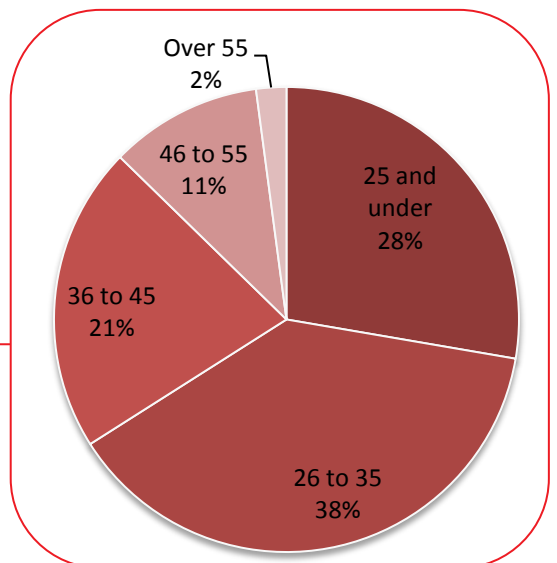
An additional 26% blogged as their part-time job, with others suggesting that blogging was part of a part-time job or that it complimented their business by generating leads or work.

The 38% of respondents blogging purely as a hobby demonstrates that it is still however being used as a recreational activity, fuelled by personal interests and passions.



WHAT IS YOUR AGE CATEGORY?

Older generation Y's and generation X's are dominating the blogosphere. Most bloggers that we surveyed (38%) were in the 26 to 35 years age group, with an additional 34% aged 36 and over. Slightly more than a quarter of respondents in this year's survey were aged 25 and under.



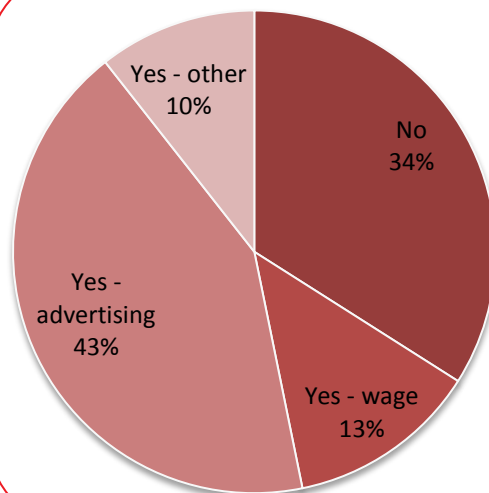
DETAILED FINDINGS

HAVE YOU RECEIVED ANY FORM OF INCOME FROM YOUR BLOG DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS?

The number of survey respondents making money from their blog has doubled in the past year, with 66% now receiving some kind of income from their writing, up from 34% in our 2011 survey.

43% are making advertising revenue, with another 13% receiving a wage.

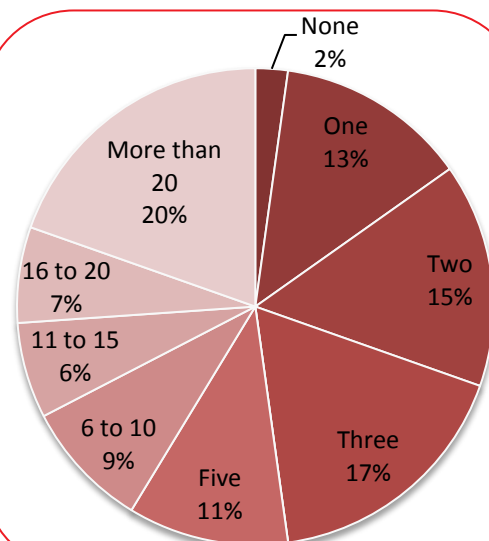
Other forms of income specified included gift cards, affiliate sales, commission on photos and articles and sponsored posts as well as indirect income, such as work won due to customers and clients visiting the blog.



HOW MANY IDEAS DO YOU RECEIVE EACH WEEK FOR YOUR BLOG? (INCLUDING PITCHES, EMAILS, PHONE CALLS AND MEDIA RELEASES)

Bloggers are being approached more and more for coverage on their blogs, with just about everyone (98%) surveyed in 2012 receiving story ideas.

In fact, almost 20% are receiving more than 20 ideas a week, with another 33% receiving between five and 20 story suggestions weekly.



DETAILED FINDINGS

HOW DO YOU GENERATE CONTENT FOR YOUR BLOG?

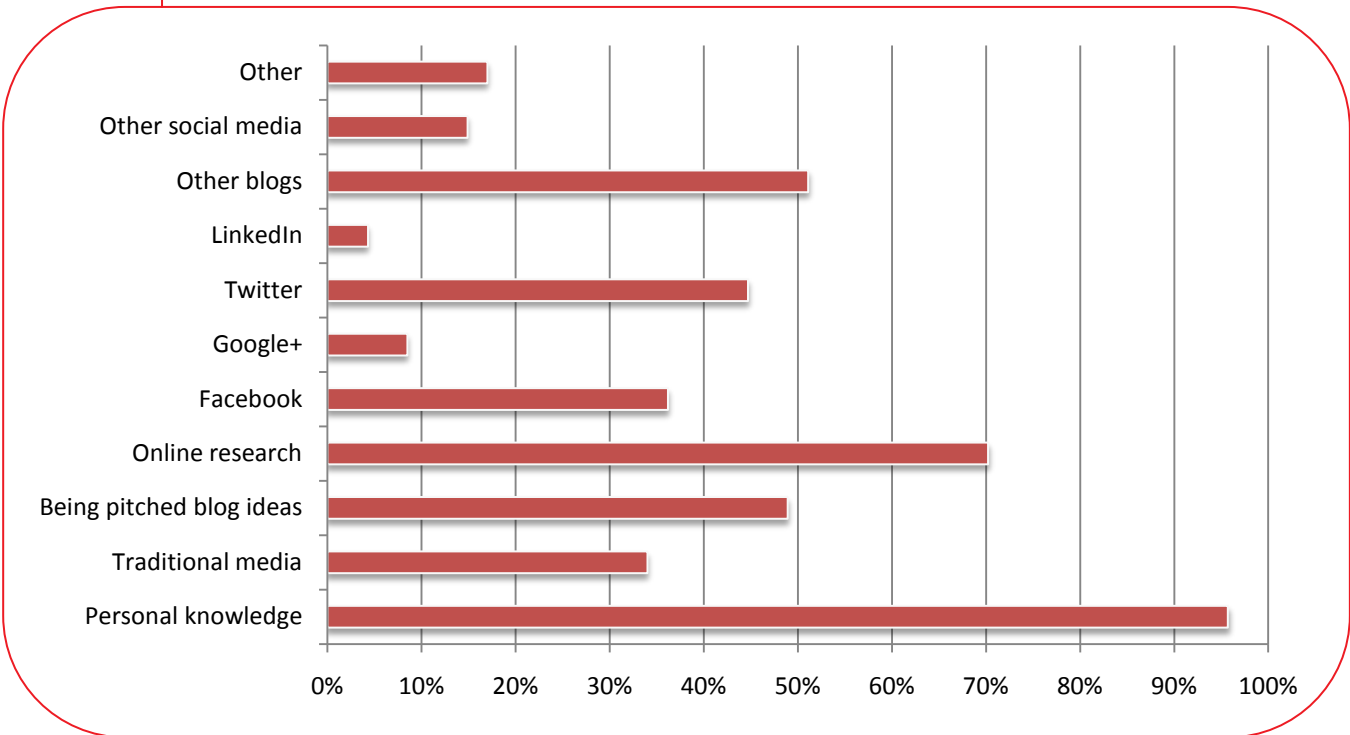
While most bloggers (96%) use their own personal knowledge to create content for their blog posts, almost half (49%) now also draw content based on blog ideas they have been pitched.

A major feature of the blogosphere is its connectivity, with more than half (51%) of bloggers drawing content from other blogs.

Online research (70%) and social media sites were also popular, with twitter the number one social media tool amongst bloggers, with 45% of respondents using it to generate content.

A range of other content sources mentioned included:

- Response to children and other mums
- Pop culture
- Current affairs and events
- Examples of work such as photography and styling



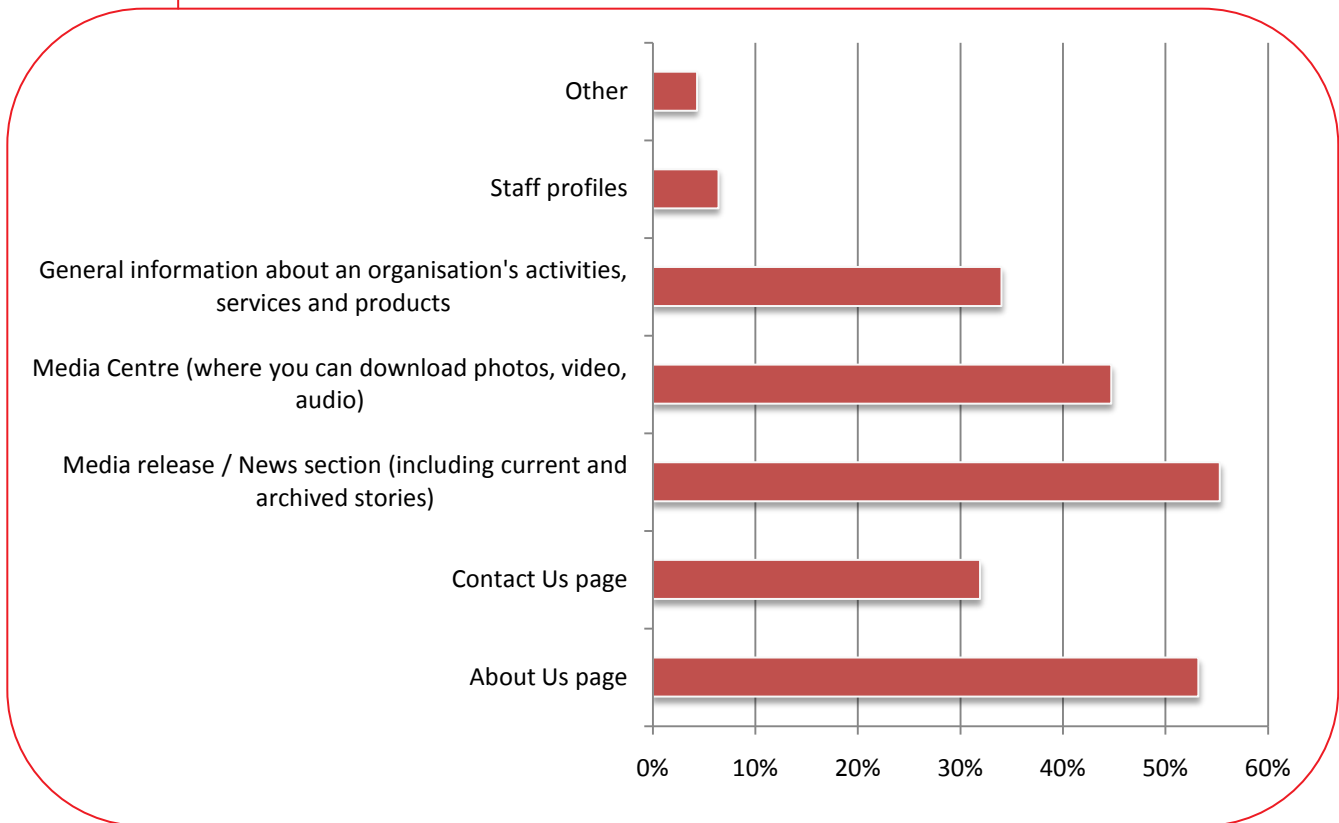
DETAILED FINDINGS

WHAT RESOURCES DO YOU MOST COMMONLY USE ON ORGANISATIONAL WEBSITES TO ASSIST WRITING YOUR BLOG?

When it comes to featuring information about a brand or company, the majority of bloggers are using media releases or visiting news sections of company websites in search of fresh and relevant content.

Many others are also drawing content from company websites, such as the “about us” page, general information about activities and products, and searching multimedia resources such as photos and video.

With almost a third visiting the “contact us” page, it would seem that bloggers are also looking to connect with company spokespeople to follow up on information.



DETAILED FINDINGS

WHAT OTHER RESOURCES WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE ON AN ORGANISATION'S WEBSITE TO ASSIST YOU IN PRODUCING YOUR BLOG?

Fresh news, information and high quality images were top on the list of requests from bloggers, as well as basic details like product prices. Some bloggers suggested other information such as a company's green credentials and relationships with other businesses and websites would be helpful.

One blogger said that tailored, exclusive information would be preferential, with a section on the company's website that only journalists and bloggers can access.

As a journalist I would say that a contact us section should always have a phone number not just an emailable form. I will skip companies that have those and search for another option that does have a direct contact."

"More up to date information. Organisations tend to be very slow in updating their pages and their content is frequently old and incorrect."

"I would like to see all organisations maintain a media section or media centre to assist journalists and bloggers."

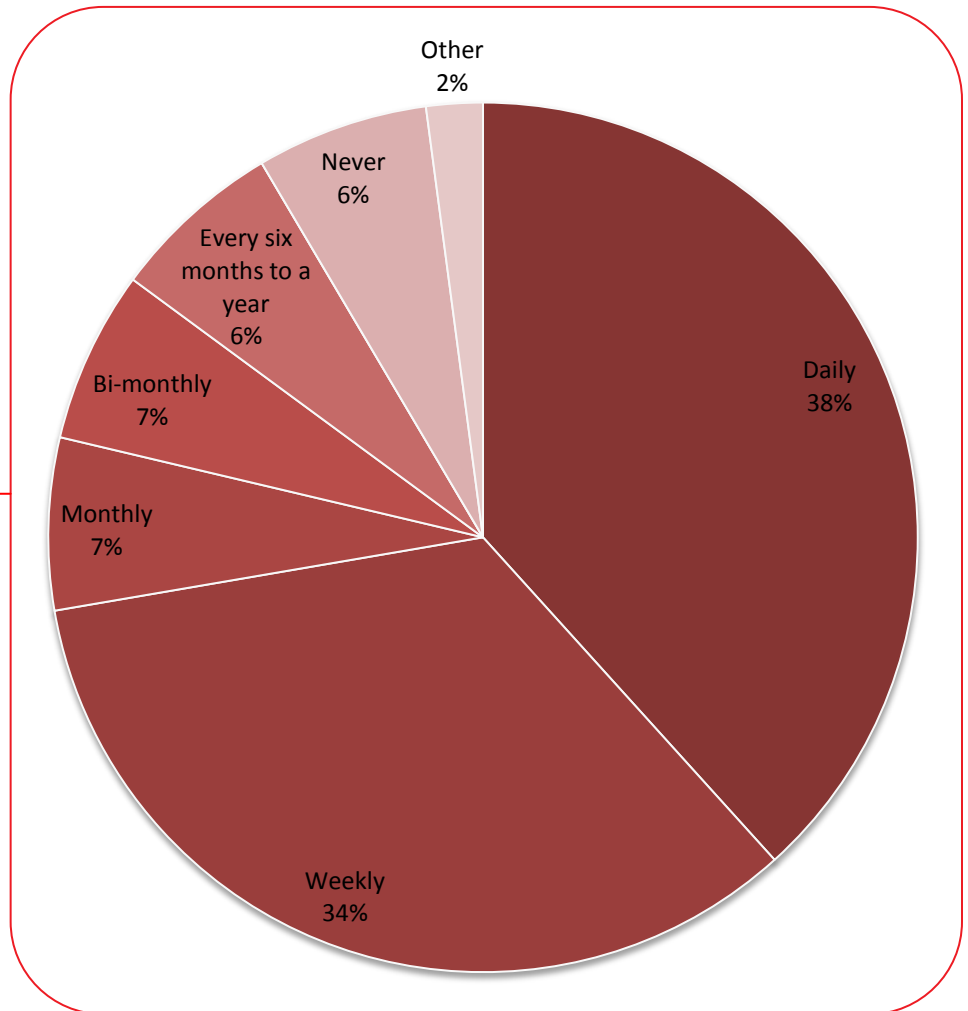
"Easy and clear links to the organisation's social media accounts are invaluable for promoting both the organisation and myself."

DETAILED FINDINGS

HOW REGULARLY ARE YOU CONTACTED BY PR PROFESSIONALS?

More than 70% of bloggers are being contacted by PR professionals each week, with almost 40% approached on a daily basis.

This is up from 9% of respondents who said they draw content from PR people in the 2011 survey.



DETAILED FINDINGS

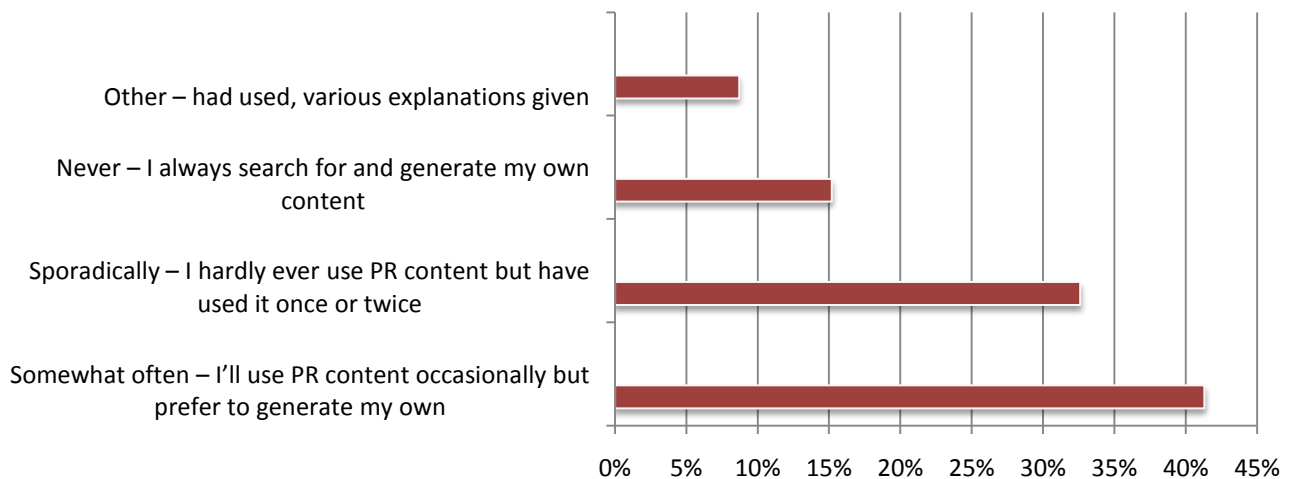
HOW OFTEN DO YOU USE CONTENT FROM A PR PROFESSIONAL AS THE BASIS FOR YOUR BLOG?

The 2012 survey saw a significant increase in the amount of bloggers who integrated content from PR professionals into their blog. In 2011, just over half of respondents (56%) said they incorporated PR material into their blog. In 2012 that figure had risen to more than 85% – a massive 29% increase.

Similar to traditional journalists, bloggers are happy to receive – and use – content supplied to them by PR professionals, as long as it is relevant to their blog.

More than 15% of respondents said they would never use content supplied to them by a PR professional, preferring to generate their own content.

One respondent said: “I welcome PR content as long as I’m confident it fits with the content vision I have for my site, and that I believe in the organisation/product – I would never post about a product simply for the sake of it, or endorse on my site something I wouldn’t want to purchase with my own money”.



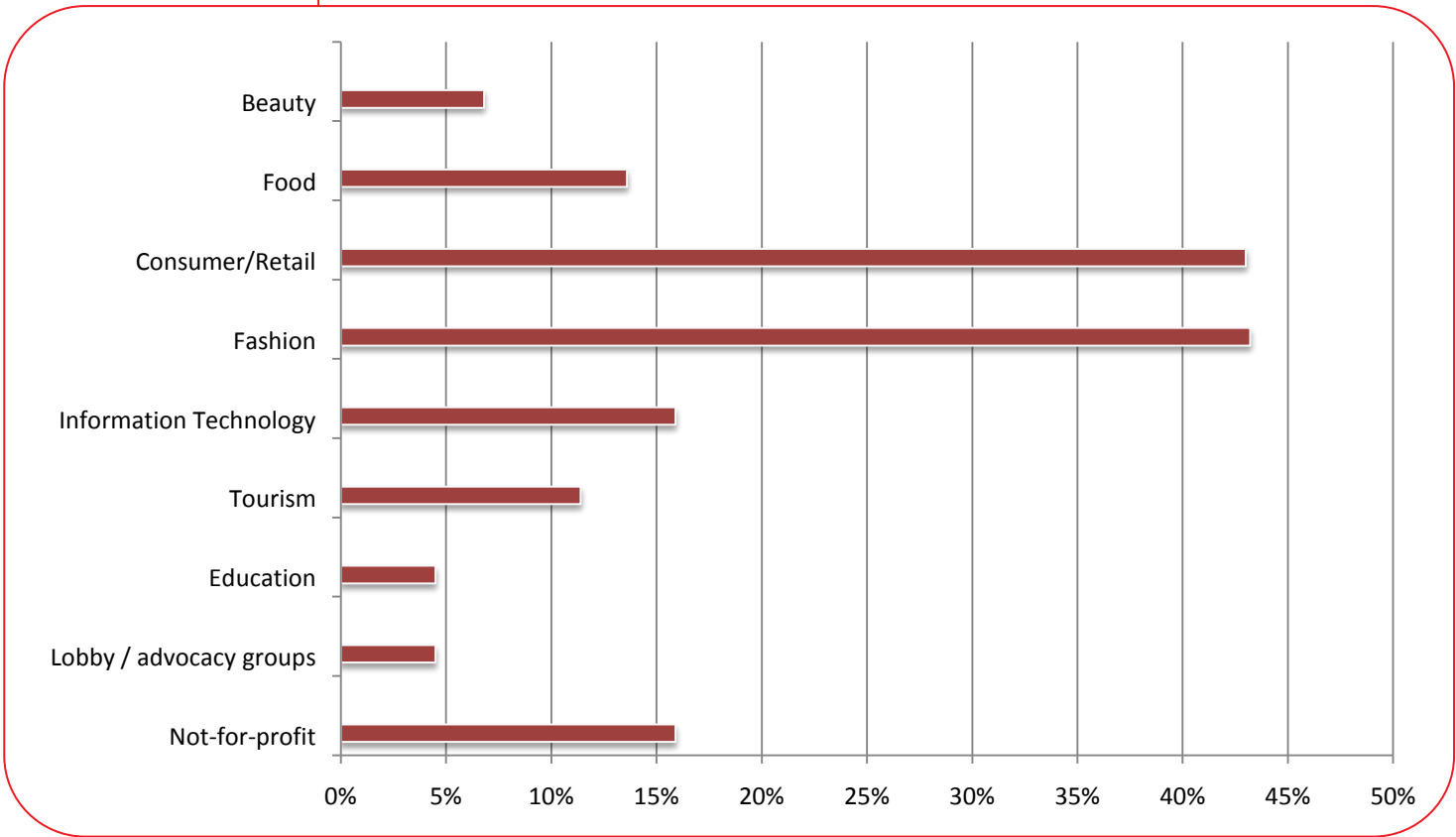
DETAILED FINDINGS

IN YOUR EXPERIENCE, WHAT INDUSTRY DO YOU FIND IS BEST AT UNDERSTANDING BLOGGERS' NEEDS?

Overwhelmingly, fashion and retail are the key industries leading the way when it comes to understanding bloggers' needs. Just over 43% of respondents identified the fashion industry as best at understanding bloggers and their blogs.

Other leading industries cited included information technology (16%), not-for-profits (16%), tourism (11%) and food (14%).

Survey respondents had no experience dealing with industries such as property, professional services, energy and resources, and finance. One respondent went as far as saying, "I don't know of any industry who knows about my needs as a blogger..." suggesting there is still a significant lack of understanding on the 'blogosphere'.



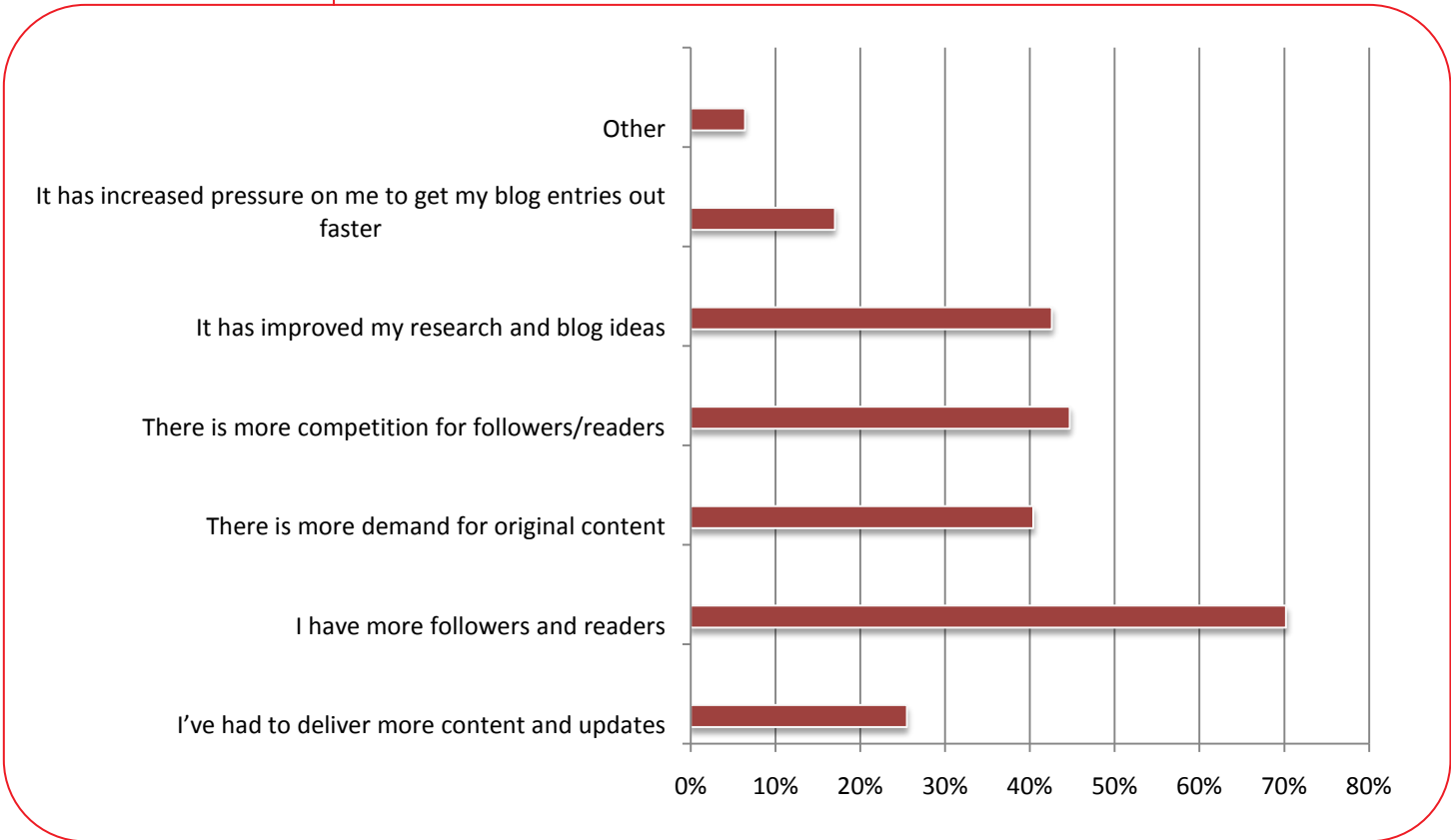
DETAILED FINDINGS

HOW HAS THE RISE OF ONLINE AND SOCIAL MEDIA NEWS AFFECTED YOUR BLOG?

For better or for worse, the majority of bloggers (94%) said that online and social media news has affected their blog in some way.

Most respondents said the rise of online and social media had had a positive effect, with more than 70% of respondents believing it had brought them more followers and readers and 43% saying it had improved their research and blog areas.

However, perhaps with a larger readership and increased competition, bloggers are now under increasing pressure to deliver more content and updates (26%) and get blog entries out faster (17%) in order to “constantly come up with something different.”



DETAILED FINDINGS

WHAT ARE THE TOP THINGS PR PRACTITIONERS CAN DO TO ASSIST YOU AS A BLOGGER?

The bloggers have spoken, with 43% of respondents suggesting that sending more personalised or relevant pitches is the top way PR practitioners can assist them.

Faster updates or exclusive information was the next top request (wanted by 12% of respondents) while almost one in ten requested the ability to speak with more company spokespeople.

Only 10% said they don't want to be contacted by PR practitioners at all.

Other responses included:

- Initial contact to check if the blog is PR friendly
- Better accessibility to images/photos
- Better/more concise information
- Products or 'rewards' for blogging

- PRs to better understand SEO
- Better understanding of the value of content
- Better understanding of analytics
- Provide press releases in word documents rather than PDFs
- Allow time for reviews
- Give opportunities to lesser-known bloggers.