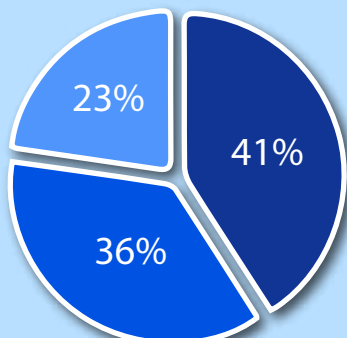


The COVID-19 Brand External Communications Survey

How BRANDS are communicating externally during The COVID-19, and how it's having an impact on their overall brand performance

Do you have an external communications plan in place for times of disaster?

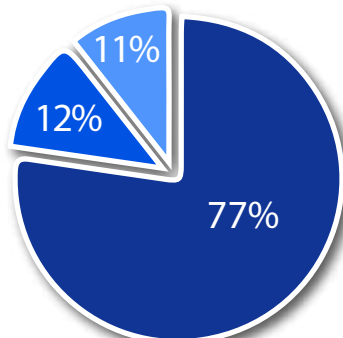
- No 41%
- Yes 36%
- We are working on one (23%)



- 41% of brands do not have an external communications plan in place during times of disaster.

Have you proactively communicated with external audiences during COVID-19?

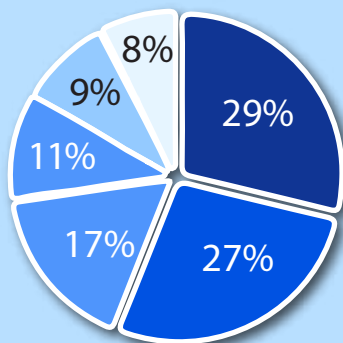
- Yes (77%)
- No (12%)
- We are working on one (11%)



- Nearly 8 out of 10 brands say they are proactively communicating with external audiences during The COVID-19. Nearly a quarter (23%) either aren't communicating or aren't sure how.

If yes, how often have you been communicating to external audiences?

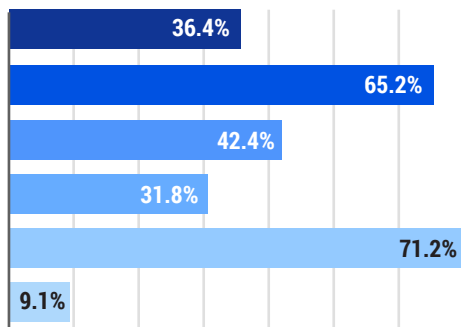
- 2-3 times per month (29%)
- Once per week (27%)
- 2-3 times per week (17%)
- Once every two weeks (11%)
- We are not communicating externally (9%)
- Once per month (8%)



- Nearly a third of brands (29%) say they are sending or posting some form of external communications between 2-3 times each week. 17% are either not communicating or only doing so once per month.

What methods are you communicating to external audiences?

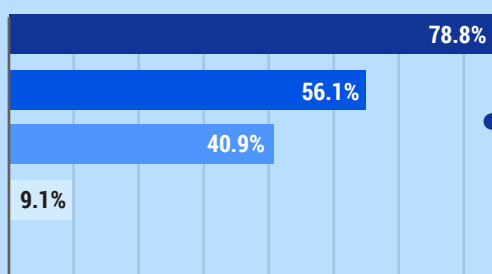
- Blog
- Social media channels (LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram)
- Press release informing the media
- Thought leadership articles
- Email to customers
- We are not communicating to external audiences



- 71% are communicating via email to customers, followed by 65% on social media.

Which external audiences are you communicating to?

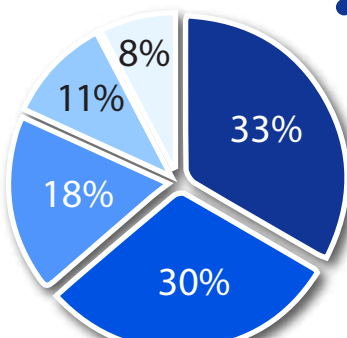
- Customers
- Industry Media
- Investor/Shareholders
- We are not communicating to external audiences



- Nearly 8 out of 10 companies are focusing external communications toward customers, with 56% targeting industry media for updates.

Which external audiences are you communicating to?

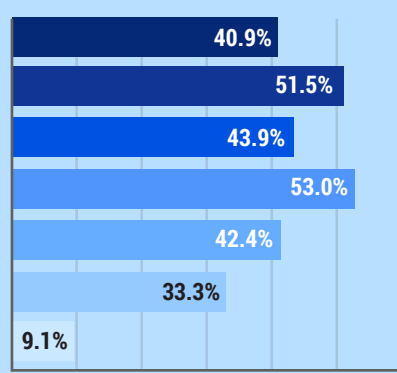
- We are mostly business, with some humanized experiences on social media (33%)
- We are a mix of informational and keeping light-hearted chatter on social (30%)
- We are not taking a business tone at all. Only light-hearted chatter on social (18%)
- We are strictly all business with our messaging on all channels (11%)
- We are not communicating to external audiences (8%)



- A third of companies say their tone of external comms is mostly business with a mix of humanized experiences on social media.

What kind of external communications are you promoting currently with The COVID-19 pandemic?

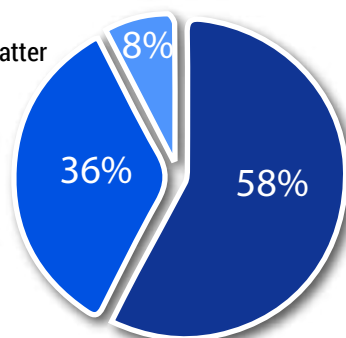
- Free resource we've made available
- Industry insights and trended data
- Free webinars
- Positive customer success stories
- Positive employee stories for inspiration
- Thought leader articles for industry audiences
- We are not communicating to external audiences



- Customer success stories, industry insights, and employee stories are just a few of the many forms of external comms right now.

Do you clearly communicate specific executives as Thought Leaders in your external communications?

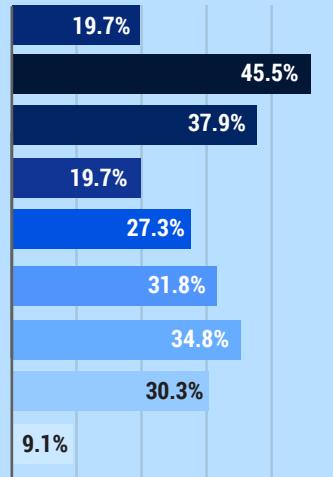
- Yes, we have been positioning 2-3 subject-matter experts (58%)
- We want to but we have not done a good job of identifying (36%)
- No, we are not communicating to external audiences (8%)



- Slightly more than half (58%) say they are positioning 2-3 company executives as Subject-Matter Experts for trends and insights.

Have you been able to measure the effectiveness of your external communication efforts?

- We've noticed a drop in website traffic
- We're seeing the same level of website traffic
- We're seeing an increase in website traffic
- We're seeing less engagement on social media channels
- We're seeing more engagement on social channels
- We're getting fewer inquiries from the media
- We're seeing more inquiries from the media
- We're getting more invitations to sit on virtual panels and webinars
- We are not communicating to external audiences

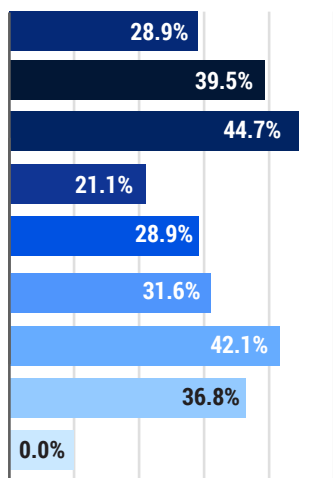


- In terms of measuring the effectiveness of their external communications, nearly half (46%) are seeing similar web traffic, and only 35% are getting more inquiries from the press to discuss industry topics.

Companies that are more aggressively communicating to external audiences are seeing more benefits to their brand.

Have you been able to measure the effectiveness of your external communication efforts?

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- However, when isolating only the companies positioning their thought leaders, 48% ARE seeing an uptick in web traffic, 42% ARE getting more inquiries from the press, and 37% ARE getting more invites to sit on virtual panels and webinars.

METHODOLOGY: Merit Mile Research is a division of integrated communication agency, Merit Mile, LLC established in 2007 and headquartered in Boca Raton, FL USA. The data was collected from an online poll with responses from 275 business leaders across various industries during the week of April 13, 2020. The purpose of the study and associated report is to gain a better understanding of the number of brands communicating to external audiences during Covid19, how brands are communicating to their audiences, and to see if there is business impact based on frequency of communications during this period. For information visit www.MeritMile.com



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