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State of Digital & Content Marketing Survey



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FOREWORD

The Power of Community

By the time you're reading this report – the seventh in eight years published by Greentarget and Zeughauser Group – we will have top lined its findings among hundreds of legal and other professional services marketers who are looking for the latest insights to inform their content and digital strategies. It's clear that our evolved approach for the 2018 report is resonating – but it's actually the broader industry conversation the research sparks that we think is particularly valuable.

I like to think of it as a “community of interpretation.”

As with previous reports, the **2018 State of Digital & Content Marketing Survey** is rich with analysis, guidance and actionable intelligence that law firm marketers can implement and have at the ready as they seek greater share of voice – and market – among in-house legal departments. But it's gratifying to see and hear from marketers across the country about the report and its findings relative to their firms, cultures and individual experiences. Their crowdsourced insights contribute to a smarter and more meaningful industry conversation, and that conversation is a big part of why we do what we do.

We hope that you find this year's study useful and valuable. With that, I present to you our 2018 report.

All the best,

John E. Corey

President & Founding Partner
Greentarget

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CLARITY IS POWER

For nearly a decade, the **State of Digital & Content Marketing Survey** has focused on the information consumption attitudes, behaviors and tendencies of in-house counsel, paired with practical guidance for law firms that continually compete for greater share of voice among this audience.

As we began work on our 2018 survey, we knew that the noisy sea of law firm content had only grown louder and deeper since a year ago, when 96 percent of in-house counsel surveyed told us they considered information overload a problem. It's clear that law firms must continually strive to rise above the noise.



To help firm marketers in that effort, in an era when content is fire and digital publishing technology is gasoline, we delve into what makes effective content stand out from the noise: the formats, attributes, preferences and other variables that in-house counsel find most valuable in the content they consume. In 2018, we use this real-time audience insight to offer fresh guidance on how firms can continually sharpen their content strategies. And those insights look to be coming at the right time, as in-house counsel say the quality of content created by law firms hasn't improved much if at all in recent years.

We found that time-constrained in-house counsel are still consuming and gleaning immense value from many forms of content, including firm-generated content, while placing greater trust and confidence in traditional media as sources of news and information.

By understanding what is most important to clients, firms can be deliberate and confident about what, when and how they publish, while harvesting rich analytics along the way to create more agile publishing operations.

The following report is our effort to show you how to do just that.

SHARPEN THE STRATEGY

By understanding what is most important to clients, firms can be deliberate and confident about what, when and how they publish.

Content Characteristics That Break Through

In-house counsel hunger for information that will help them do their jobs, according to our research. Survey respondents say utility, above all other attributes, attracts them to the content they consume most frequently. That finding, alone, isn't surprising. But the degree to which that attribute outranks others might be; 77 percent rank utility as the attribute they value most – ahead of timeliness (68 percent), author (20 percent) and vastly ahead of graphics and visual appeal (both 7 percent).

Respondents also show little interest in content with a strong point of view (4 percent), though that characteristic is an important element in utility and often a key driver of strong headlines/subject lines (valued by 51 percent of respondents). The confluence of these factors

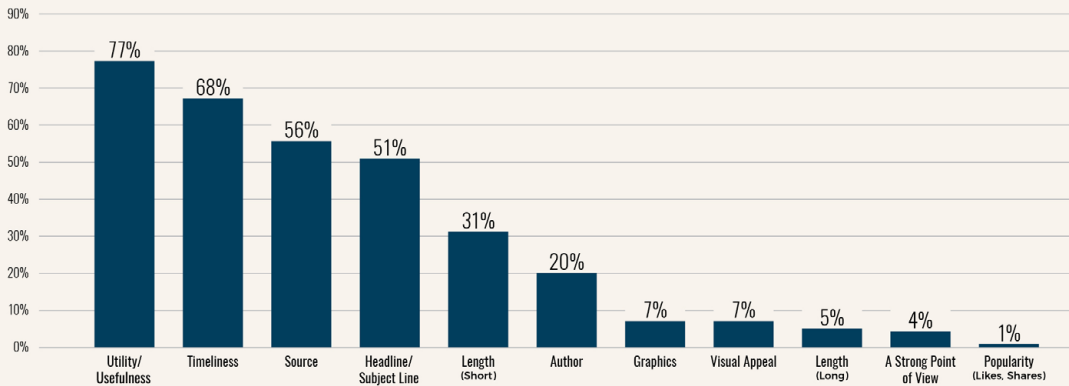
represents a sweet spot for marketers; consider this recent alert headline: “How exporters will be impacted by the US withdrawal from the Iranian Nuclear Deal.” Like any compelling headline, this one addresses the audience directly while, through the adverb “how,” promising utility (understanding the business impact of withdrawal) and hinting at a point of view (interpreting the move).

Our results also make it clear that in-house counsel value brevity in the age of information overload. Thirty-one percent say they like content of a short length compared with just 5 percent who value longer content. Content creators owe it to these audiences to quickly and efficiently tell them what happened, why they should care and what they should do about it.

In-house counsel also want to get content while it's hot. A full 68 percent value timely information, trailing utility as a valued attribute. This attribute was especially important when we asked respondents about what they value most for individual content types, particularly when reading articles, alerts and newsletters or attending in-person events.

That brings to mind something we often hear: a good piece of content today is better than a fantastic piece three days from now. The ability to execute timely content speaks directly to content creators' and marketers' efficiency and, often, to their content strategy.

What attracts you to the content that you consume most frequently?



Favored Content Types & Attributes

A picture may be worth 1,000 words, but in-house counsel prefer the long route, ranking articles, alerts and newsletters ahead of other, more visual types of content. Articles scored highest (77 percent), followed by alerts (70 percent) and newsletters (59 percent).

Digging deeper, we also asked respondents what they find most valuable for each type of content – they're looking for articles that are educational, timely and relevant, and alerts that are timely, relevant and brief.



The latter data point can be useful for law firms working to balance quick turnarounds with attorneys' instinctual desire to write lengthy analyses. We now know that, when writing about breaking news, brevity and speed matter more than depth. Meanwhile, interactive and visual elements are not seen as valuable for articles, alerts or newsletters – a deviation from conventional wisdom that holds today's readers prefer visual content, particularly on mobile devices.

In fact, respondents value brevity over length in nearly all of their content. The exception: research reports. In that area, respondents want depth (65 percent) nearly as much as they want reports to be educational (69 percent). This makes sense and points to an opportunity to use research reports to drive weighty, meaty conversations around important issues.

Respondents rank research reports the fifth-most valued content type, behind articles, alerts, newsletters – and in-person events/conferences. The preference for in-person content echoes an April 2018 study by the Legal Marketing Association and Bloomberg Law, which found that the two areas most effective for developing new business are client meetings and firm-hosted events.

Additionally, two-thirds of marketers view events as one of the most effective business development activities overall, according to the study. Such events represent an opportunity for firms to make news and put their messaging and insights front and center while also distributing them across multiple channels before, during and after the gatherings.

The Relationship Between Value and Frequency

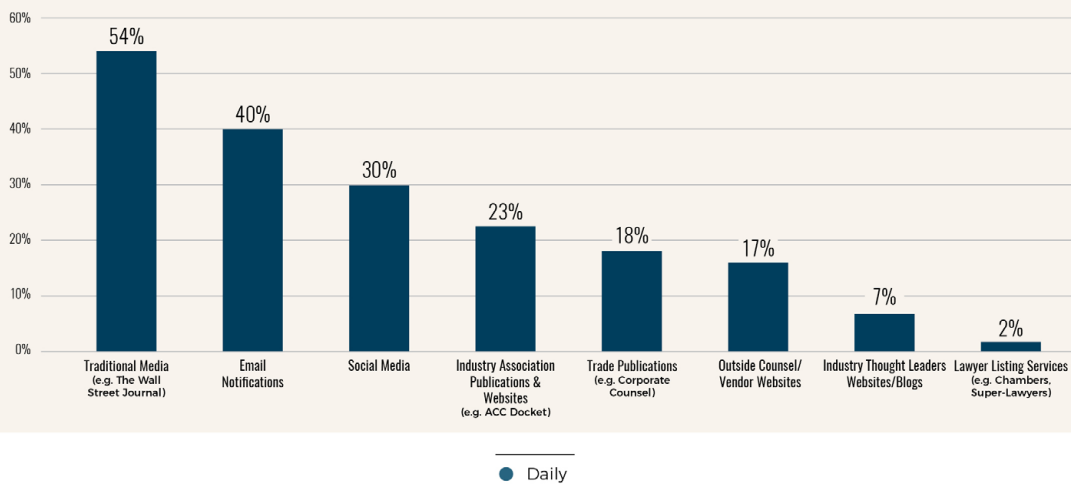
As in previous years, for our 2018 research we asked in-house counsel to rank the content sources they frequent and value most as sources of content. Perpetuating a trend we've seen in our research over the past decade, in-house counsel continue to value traditional media above other content sources – a sign of deep appreciation for well-regarded curators, even in

the age of so-called fake news. Traditional media sources (e.g., *The Wall Street Journal*) lead among other content sources that in-house lawyers view as “very valuable” at 45 percent, followed by industry association content at 43 percent.

We also compared the perceived value general counsel place on content

Frequency of Content Use

Please indicate the frequency with which you access the following sources of content for legal, business and industry news and information.



sources to the frequency with which they consume those sources. Traditional media tops both measures, as the most highly valued and the content that in-house counsel consume most on a daily basis (54 percent). But while respondents value industry association content almost as highly as traditional media, less than a quarter consume content from those sources every day. This somewhat mirrors trade publications and industry thought leaders' websites and blogs – where value ranks higher than frequency, likely a result of publication cadence.

On the other hand, about a third of respondents say they consume social media daily, but just 11 percent say they find it very valuable as a source for legal, business and industry news and information. This is likely because some

respondents are better at filtering than others and an indication that in-house counsel still value curation by traditional media more than by their friends and colleagues. It also likely reflects something we all know: As valuable as Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter can be, each visit to those and other social media sites threatens to veer into a tremendous waste of time. Law firms can help by better curating content via social media.

Big picture, this year's data shows that content creators who look at frequency alone to measure content's value risk missing important ways to connect with their audiences. In fact, we found only one type of content that in-house counsel say has minimal value and they rarely consume: lawyers listing services (e.g., Chambers and Super Lawyers).

APPRECIATION FOR CURATION

In-house counsel continue to value traditional media above other content sources – a sign of deep appreciation for well-regarded curators, even in the age of so-called fake news.

Little Traction for Video – but Good Signs for Podcasts

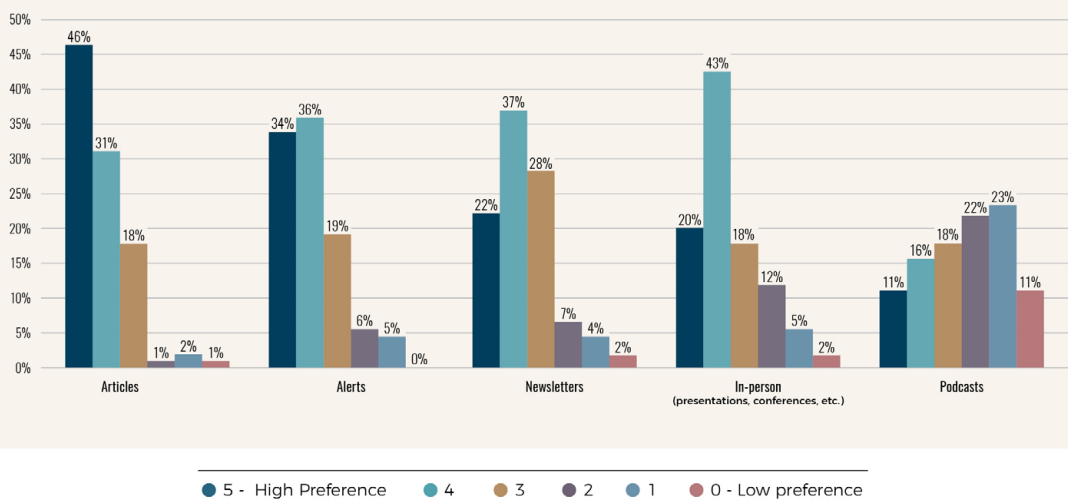
Respondents rank video as their least preferred content type; just 19 percent say they prefer it and 10 percent give it their lowest preference. That runs contrary to conventional marketing wisdom, particularly among consumer marketers, who have found enormous success with video. But the bulk of professional services content simply doesn't lend itself to moving pictures, and

our respondents clearly have seen little to convince them otherwise.

On the other hand, 27 percent of in-house counsel ranks podcasts highly as a content vehicle they preferred. This might be surprising – general counsel generally are not the kind of early adopters one would expect to find embracing a relatively new

Most & Least Preferred Content Types

Please indicate your preference for reading and viewing the following types of content.



medium for law firms like podcasts. But it does align with our experience, which has shown promising returns for audio storytelling. Podcasting gives consumers hands- and eyes-free information accessible on their commute, at the gym and in other untraditional venues. And it doesn't bear the hefty costs associated with video production.

Podcasts are one of only two mediums where respondents rank entertainment in the top three attributes they value, offering the potential for more creative storytelling for firms willing to take risks in the name of rising above the noise. As with video, high production values and engaging content are critical for podcasts to be effective.



Additional Findings

Quality of Law Firm Content

- Respondents rate content created by law firms at roughly the same level of quality as in past years. This year, 52 percent rate it as “good to excellent”, which is the same as in 2017.
- About the same percentages of respondents in each of those surveys rated content generated by law firms as less than satisfactory.
- That the past four years have yielded no real improvement, despite massive investments in content, clearly indicates that law firms can do better – and that the opportunity to stand out remains.

Emerging Topic Focus: Legal Operations

- In-house law departments face no abatement of the drive for efficiency, bolstering their appetite for content addressing the emerging field of legal operations.
- While most survey respondents don't participate directly in the Corporate Legal Operations Consortium, there is an appetite for operations-focused content: 52 percent report receiving legal operations-focused content, and more than a third of those say they would like more.
- While this may appear insignificant at face value, legal ops didn't exist 10 years ago. And as the spring CLOC Institute gatherings in Las Vegas the last two years demonstrate, this movement and community undoubtedly is gaining traction and influence.

Users Love or Hate Social Media

- Compared with previous years, our survey participants report a clear divide in their use of social media. The exact same percentage of respondents – 46 percent – say they use social media once a week, and never.
- As bifurcation increases, putting content resources into social becomes a higher risk-reward endeavor. Knowing which your specific audience prefers will help content creators and marketers avoid wasting resources and missing opportunities.
- Past surveys have shown us that in-house lawyers' social media usage leans heavily toward LinkedIn and blogs and much less toward Facebook or Twitter. Lawyers still need to take advantage of these channels to amplify their content and messages, particularly to engage the media and potential recruits.

In the era of information overload, firms have to step up their content games if they want to be heard and, more importantly, if they want their content to build influence, drive engagement and deliver leads.

The best way to get there, as we've noted in previous years, is with a documented content strategy – a road map that articulates the firm's purpose, sets out its plan and commits it to a measurable outcome. But any worthwhile content strategy must align with firm strategy and support its brand. And it must be constructed on a bedrock of audience intelligence. That's where we hope our research and the following guidance can help – by giving firm marketers a stronger grasp on what in-house attorneys value most in content, where they find it and how often they consume it.



Guidance for Law Firms

Optimize and Document Your Content Strategy

Our 2018 results offer insight into the latest priorities of time-strapped in-house counsel, providing you with some of the crucial raw materials you'll need to build, refine and document a content strategy that maximizes your likelihood of reaching them where they are (page 22) and in the formats they are most motivated to consume (page 23). Research from the Content Marketing Institute suggests organizations that take the time to document their content strategies report greater effectiveness with their content marketing efforts.

Set Priorities – and Find Your Tilt

An effective content strategy also ties into the 80-20 rule, where firms allocate their greatest energy, resources and creativity to the content that serves their strategic priorities while optimizing the rest, recognizing that it is difficult to say “no” to non-strategic practices and attorneys. As a vital next step, it's important to find your tilt – the point of view that, according to Joe Pulizzi, founder of the Content Marketing Institute, separates you from everyone else in your marketplace. Tilt is the unique perspective you apply to your content and creates an opportunity for you to attack, lead and ultimately own the category. Our research suggests that firms can most effectively find their respective tilts through client-centric events and branded research reports.

Up Your Earned Media Game

One thing stands out each year we conduct this survey: In-house counsel value traditional media sources (e.g., *The Wall Street Journal*) over all others (page 22). This year's survey, conducted in the thick of the so-called fake news era, again affirms that earned media should be a core pillar of any law firm's marketing and business development strategy. As always, succeeding in traditional media relations requires skillful participation to create long-term, trusting relationships with influential journalists at

important media outlets. Association with strong media brands is one way to enhance your own brand and the awareness of your practices and prominent lawyers.

Email: The Purest Transaction Between Publisher and Reader

With no algorithm, Facebook filter or other intermediary standing between publisher and reader, email provides the purest transaction available to most marketers. Recipients open an email from you because they want to hear what you have to tell them. It's also the primary digital conduit for most professionals, including in-house lawyers (page 23).

But email's one-to-one nature also means that readers will blame you – and only you – if subject lines or headlines don't resonate, if content falls flat or if you are using a dated list. Put energy into this potent medium – its value easily justifies the investment.

Audience: The Power of Storytelling

First, start with the audience. That may sound like obvious counsel, but any scan of law firm content shows it's frequently forgotten, or ignored – and that omission inevitably limits content's chances for success. Rather than building your content around what you want to say, keep it relentlessly focused on what your audience wants or needs to learn from you. It's the simplest way to avoid using resources for content that isn't serving your business goals.

Second, write about people, not policies, industries or businesses. Approach your storytelling by thinking first about who is impacted, not what. You can begin on the right foot by starting headlines and content titles with a person, for example, "Insurers of Directors and Officers of Delaware Corporations Must Take Heed of The Superior Court's Recent Murdock Decision," rather than "Superior Court Releases Murdock Decision" or "Companies Must Take Heed..." (Source: JD Supra)

Tell Busy People Why They Should Read – and Use Data to Test the Results

There's a lot to think about when it comes to headlines. Would you rather click on a title that tells readers what the news is or one that explains why it matters? This is especially important when it comes to social promotion – so headlines should include short, active words while avoiding constructions that back into the headline's meaning.

And then, once content is published, harvest readership data to make sure the headlines (and other content) are working. A good headline attracted more than half of survey participants to their most frequently visited content (see page 26). This involves using data tools as well as establishing a practice of regular monitoring within your content team to keep abreast of what is and isn't working for your audience.

Embrace the Power of Brevity – Except...

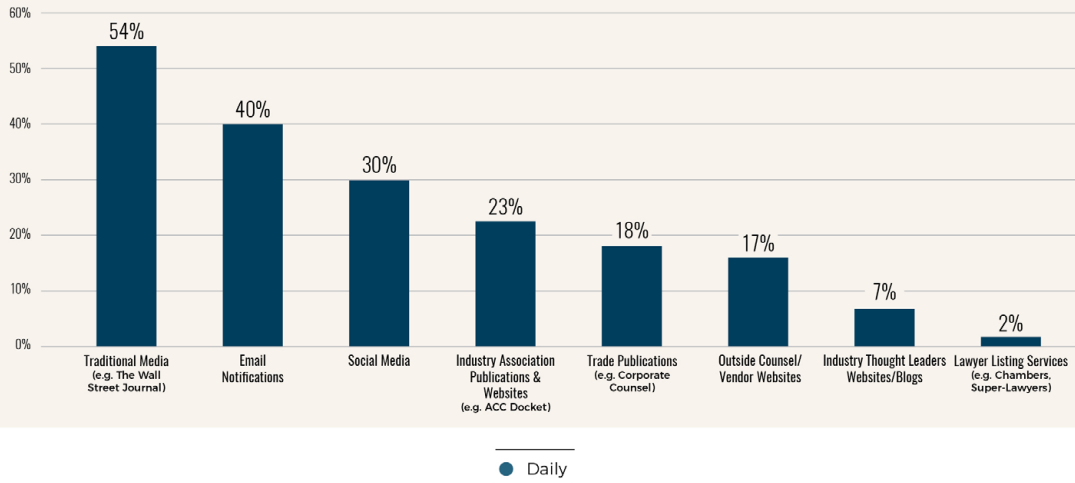
It might be tempting to write long articles in pursuit of thought leadership credentials. Lawyers in particular often default to treatise-length on even the narrowest topics. But in-house counsel are busy – and they actually prefer short articles, according to our findings (page 26). In fact, our respondents said they value in-depth material in just one content type (research reports).

Also remember that respondents place a high value on content that's timely (page 26) – which often is sacrificed when a writer tries to write 1,500 words where 500 would do. This is great information to have at the ready the next time one of your firm's partners is hell-bent on developing a treatise.

Full Results

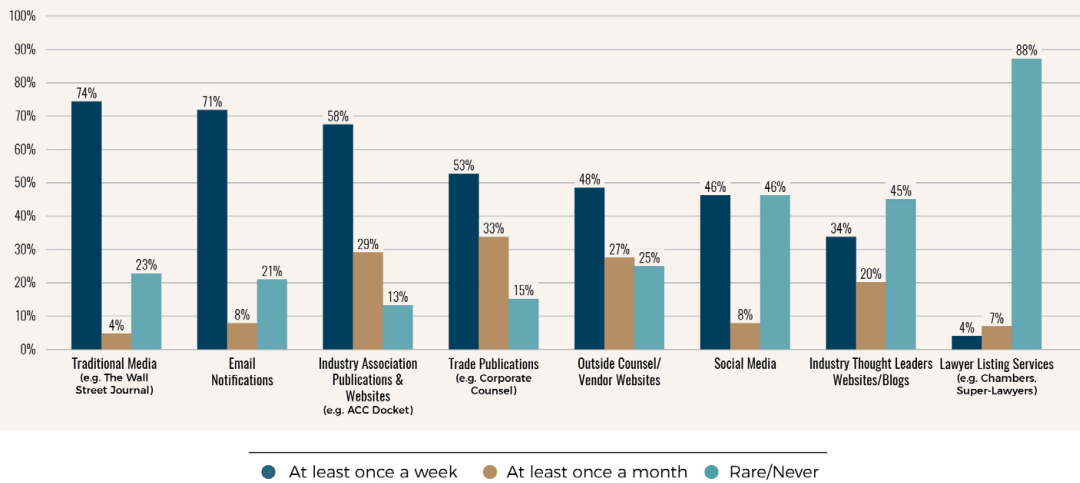
Frequency of Content Use

Please indicate the frequency with which you access the following sources of content for legal, business and industry news and information.



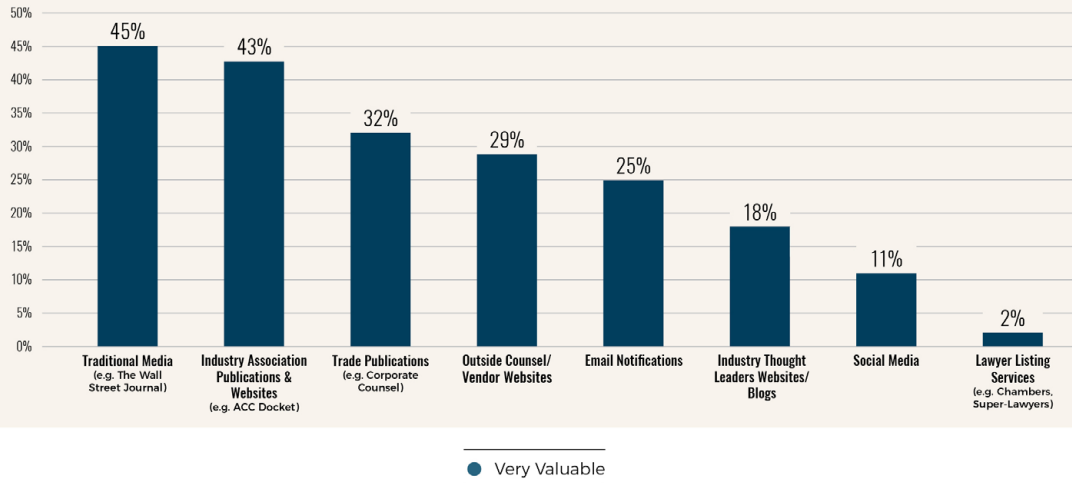
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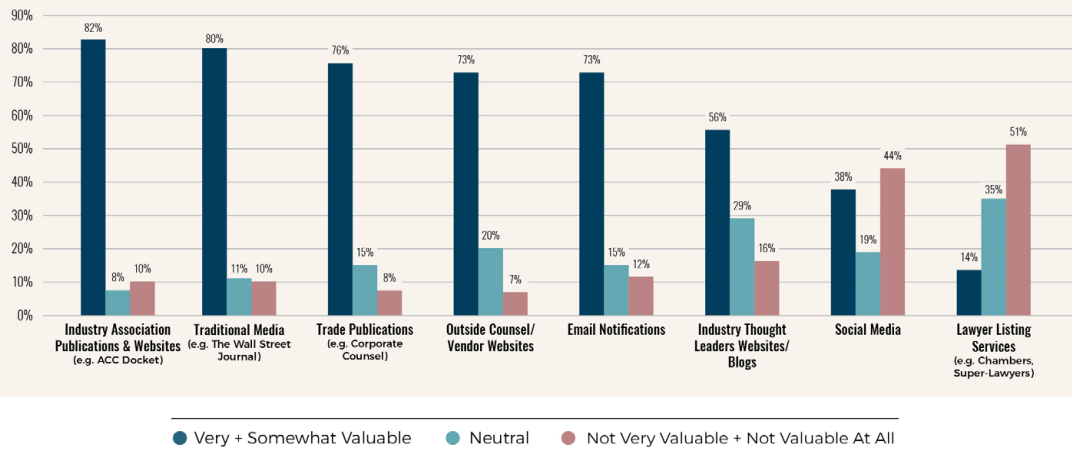
Value of Content Sources

How valuable are these sources of content for legal, business and industry news and information?

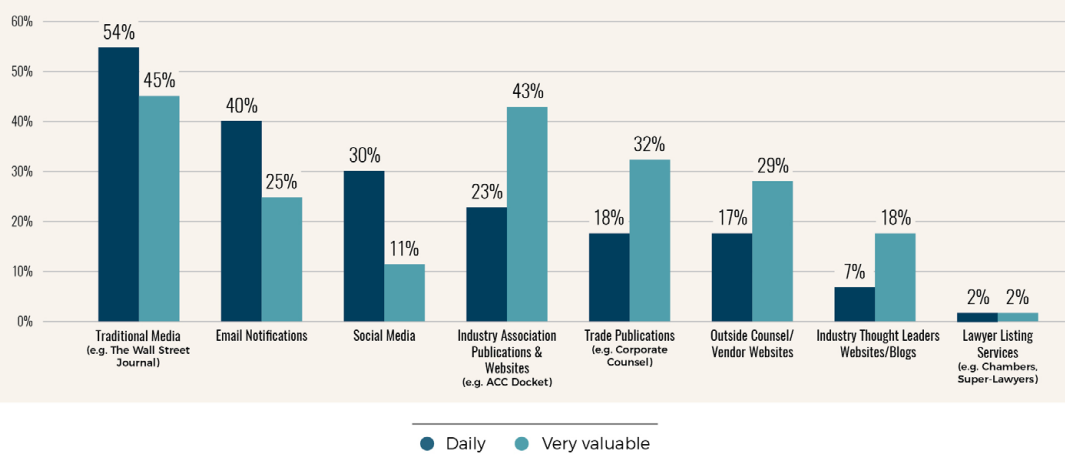


Value of Content Sources

How valuable are these sources of content for legal, business and industry news and information?



Correlation Between Frequency & Value of Content Sources



Most & Least Preferred Content Types (weighted)

Please indicate your preference for reading and viewing the following types of content.



Top Attributes For Each Content Type

Select the attributes that you like for each type of content.

ARTICLES

- Educational (92%)
- Relevant (80%)
- Timely (61%)

ALERTS

- Timely (86%)
- Relevant (66%)
- Brief (63%)

NEWSLETTERS

- Relevant (77%)
- Educational (67%)
- Timely (62%)

IN-PERSON

- Educational (83%)
- Relevant (78%)
- Timely (49%)

RESEARCH REPORTS

- Educational (69%)
- In-Depth (65%)
- Relevant (58%)

INTERACTIVE CHARTS

- Educational (44%)
- Visual (44%)
- Easy To Read (38%)

INFOGRAPHICS

- Visual (50%)
- Easy To Read (43%)
- Educational (40%)

WEBSITE CONTENT

- Brief (47%)
- Relevant (45%)
- Easy To Read (41%)

PODCASTS

- Educational (61%)
- Relevant (46%)
- Entertaining (44%)

VIDEO

- Visual (51%)
- Educational (43%)
- Entertaining (43%)

Least Important Attributes For Each Content Type

Select the attributes that you like for each type of content.

ARTICLES

- Interactive (2%)
- Visual (10%)
- Brief (20%)

ALERTS

- Interactive (0%)
- In-Depth (1%)
- Visual/Entertaining (6%)

NEWSLETTERS

- Interactive (0%)
- Visual (8%)
- Entertaining (12%)

IN-PERSON

- Easy To Read (4%)
- Brief (9%)
- Easy To Access (20%)

RESEARCH REPORTS

- Interactive (1%)
- Entertaining (4%)
- Visual (5%)

INTERACTIVE CHARTS

- In-Depth (6%)
- Entertaining (8%)
- Technical (18%)

INFOGRAPHICS

- In-Depth (6%)
- Interactive (10%)
- Entertaining (16%)

WEBSITE CONTENT

- Technical (4%)
- In-Depth (5%)
- Entertaining (8%)

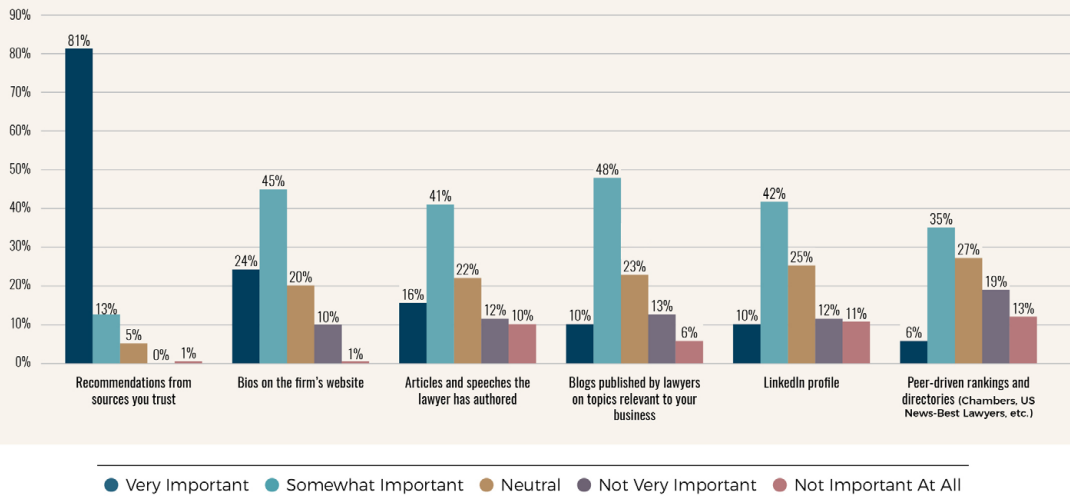
PODCASTS

- Interactive (0%)
- Easy To Read (1%)
- Technical (7%)

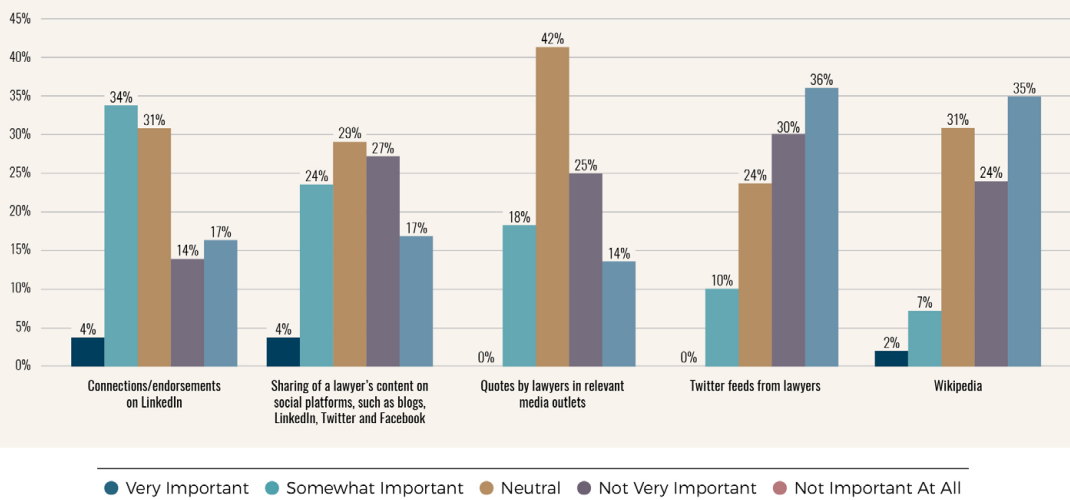
VIDEO

- Interactive (1%)
- Easy To Read (3%)
- Technical (7%)

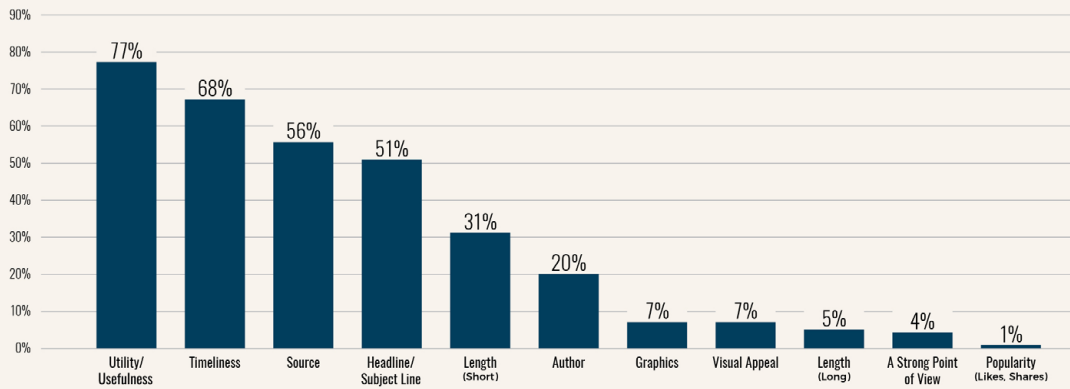
Please indicate the importance of the following in helping you to research outside lawyers and law firms for potential hire.



Please indicate the importance of the following in helping you to research outside lawyers and law firms for potential hire.



What attracts you to the content that you consume most frequently?



A DEEPER ANALYSIS

Something to Care About: The Key to Engagement



As a journalist, I reported, wrote, edited and otherwise worked on dozens of stories about companies. If you went back and read them all (which I wouldn't recommend), you wouldn't find a single story about a company. Instead you'd find dozens of CEO sagas, founders' tales and executive profiles.

It's a basic rule of business journalism – and one that professional services organizations can apply to their own content: Don't write about companies, write about people, even when you're really writing about companies. It's a simple narrative trick, but it makes perfect sense. Would you rather read about a big, faceless organization, or about an actual person?



When you tell a story about a real person, even a powerful CEO or wealthy entrepreneur, who has talent and shortcomings, triumphs and failures, challenges to overcome and risks to navigate, you give the reader someone to identify with, to empathize with, to root for, or against. Whatever they feel about that person, they're more likely to keep reading because it gives them something, in the form of a fellow human, to care about.

As marketers, we should do the same. It may not be easy to anthropomorphize issues, market dynamics, policy changes and the like, but our 2018 research shows that in-house counsel value utility above all other attributes in the content they frequently consume.

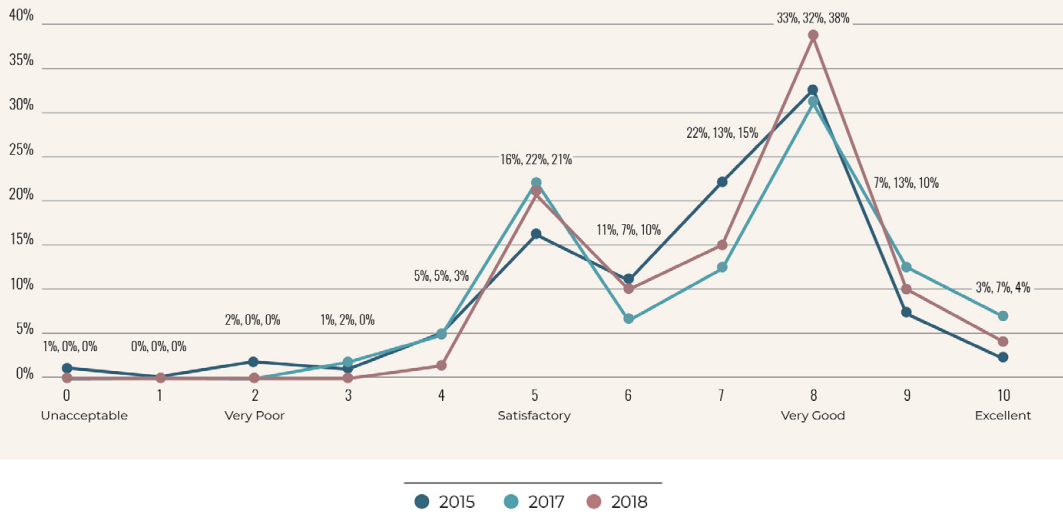
So giving them something to care about means telling our readers, explicitly, how our insights will be useful to them. We should hand it to them in our headlines if we want them to start reading, and throughout our copy if we don't want them to stop.

It's no trick. It's just good storytelling.

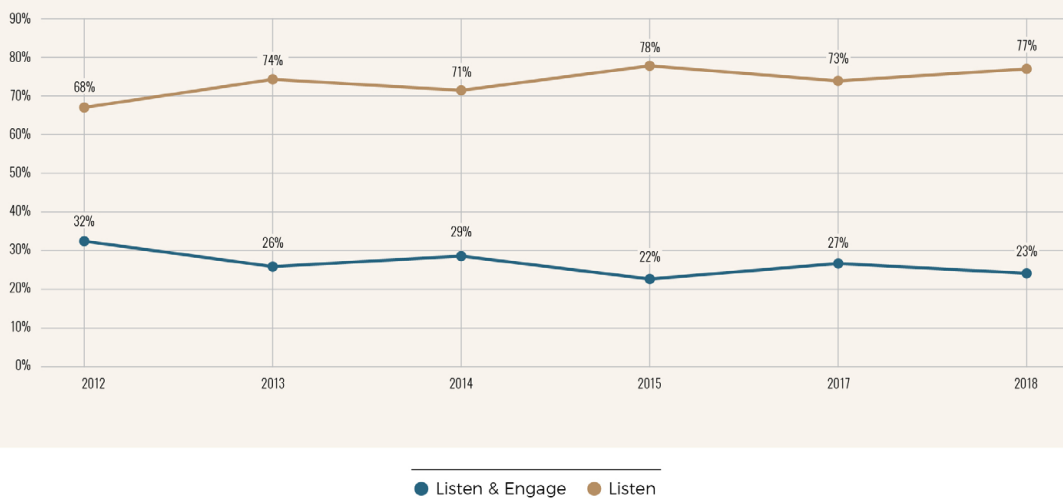
Brandon Copple

Director of Content & Editorial Strategy
Greentarget

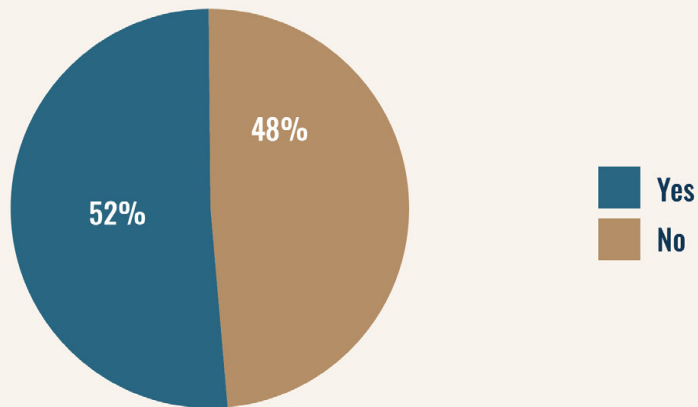
On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being excellent), how would you characterize the overall value of the content produced by outside law firms (client alerts, newsletters, blogs, etc.)?



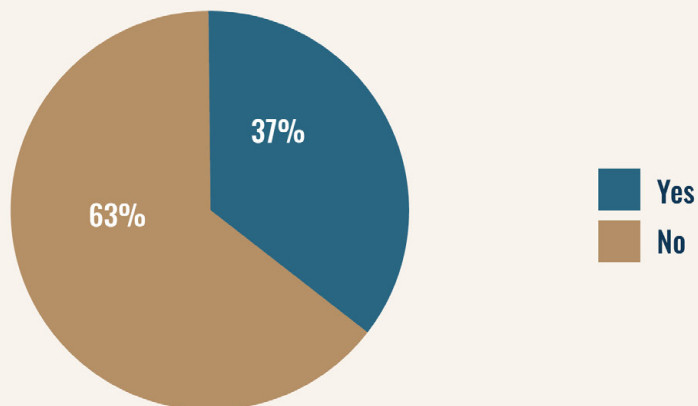
Which of the following best describes the way you use social media today?



Do you receive content focused on legal operations from your outside law firms today?



Among the 52% of GCs who do receive legal operations focused content, 37% want to receive more of it.



A DEEPER ANALYSIS

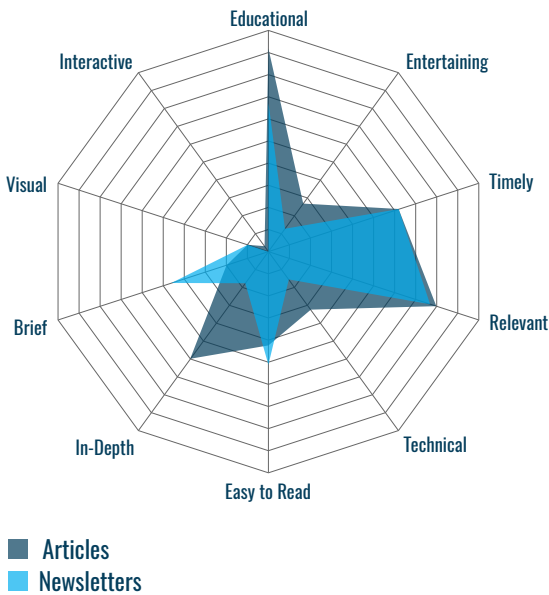
Spider Charts: Make Insights Come Alive



Every year as part of this report, we endeavor to find new ways to make our data actionable, which starts with breaking it down to bring the insights into the light. One of the best ways to do that with complex data is to visualize it, and this year we explored several new visualization techniques.

Enter spider charts.

Also called radar charts, these visualizations are commonly used to compare NFL prospects. The technique is applicable to our findings because – for the first time – we asked respondents to select the attributes they most valued for different types of content. Here’s a comparison of articles and newsletters:



John Matthew Upton
Director of Digital Strategy & Analytics
Greentarget

Interestingly, respondents favor text over visuals, and generally value brevity. In the comparison to above, user preferences for these two content types is clear, including a higher threshold for brevity in newsletters. From this data we can infer some basic guidelines for newsletters, such as using bulleted lists or short blurbs with links to longer-form content. The data also suggests that it’s better to err on the side of “more curated” versus “more inclusive” when determining which or how many stories to blurb.

Spider Chart: Alerts & Newsletters

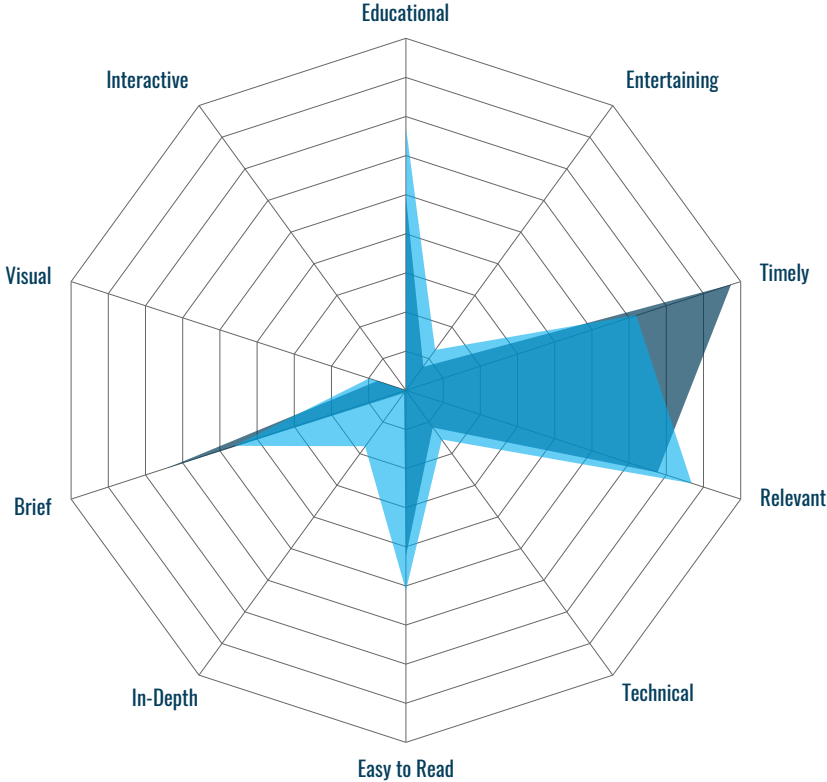


Alerts

—VS—



Newsletters



Similar to our initial spider chart on page 30, comparing alerts and newsletters has interesting implications for content production. Users’ overwhelming preference is that alerts are timely and brief; though you might publish a newsletter on a biweekly or monthly cadence, alerts have a much shorter shelf life and should be published as often and as quickly as possible. Note also that alerts and newsletters share the most similar shape across all of the content types; if you produce both, it may be worth comparing the relative interaction rates and focusing effort on the vehicle that gets the most traction among your users.

Spider Chart: In-Person & Podcasts

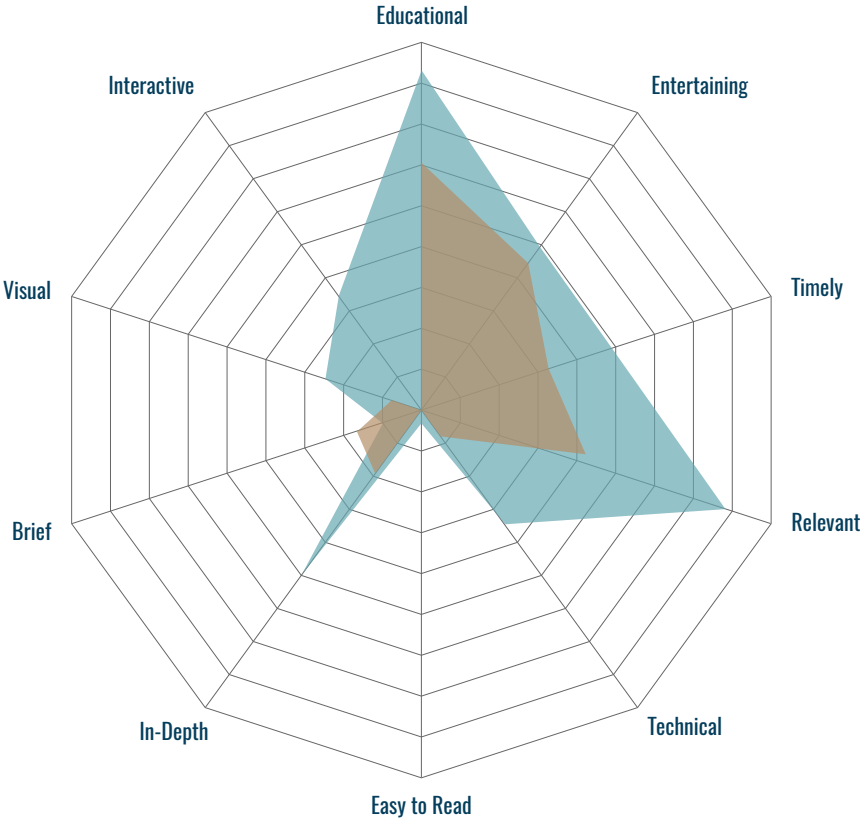


In-Person

—VS—



Podcasts



User preference for these two content types runs along very similar axes, as they share the same basic shape. Users rated in-person presentations as one of the most important content types, but anyone who’s ever presented at a large industry event knows they require significant effort. While the effort to launch a podcast is front-loaded, production becomes routine and streamlined over time. That means a strong podcast with a regular cadence can have similar benefits to in-person content with a lower barrier of entry. Additionally, podcasts are inherently trackable, and easily accessible performance metrics allow you to determine which material resonates most.

Spider Chart: In-Person & Research Reports

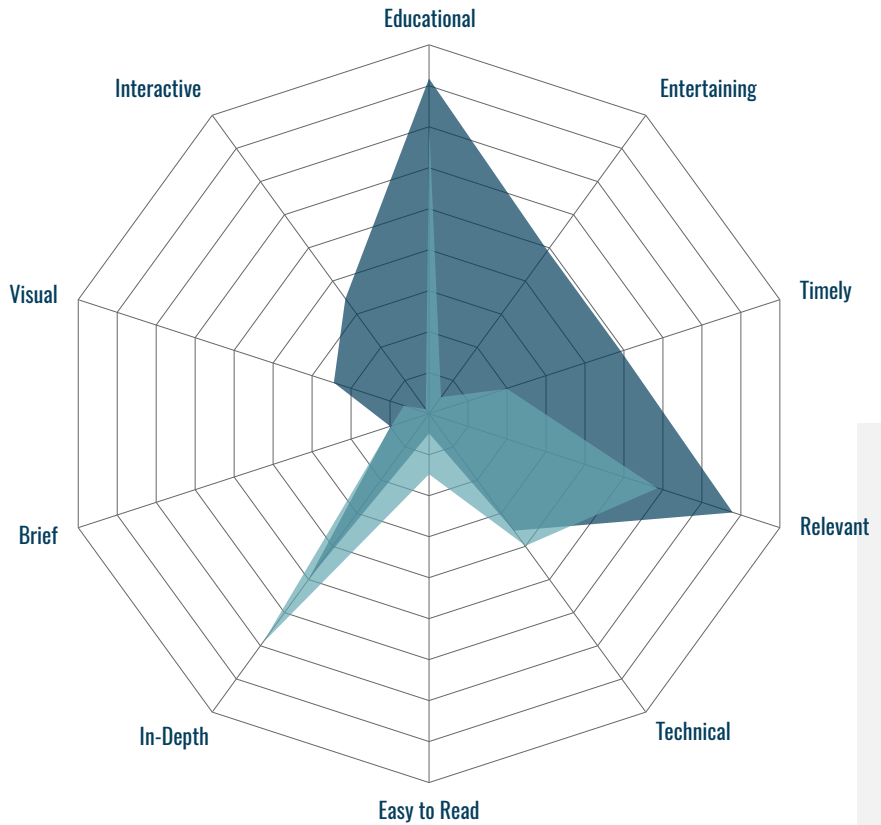


In-Person

—VS—



Research Reports



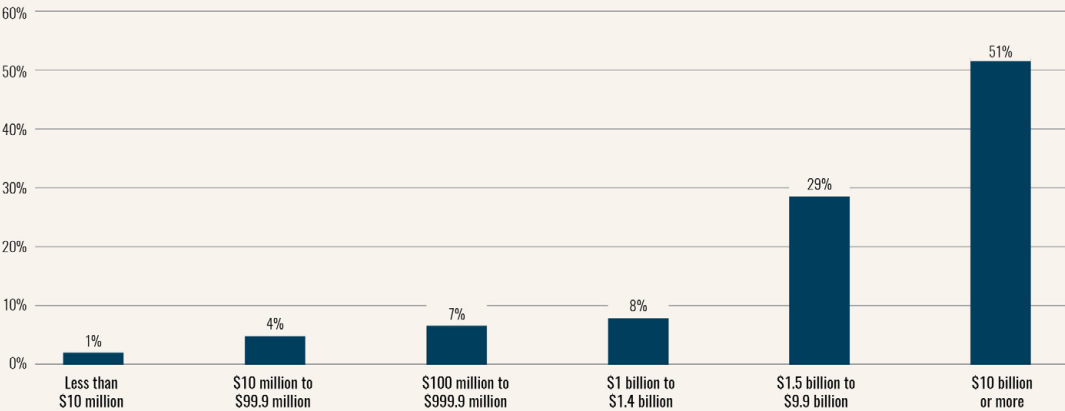
Here we find an interesting paradox: According to survey respondents, research reports' value is derived from depth and detail more than any other content type, yet they consider other content to be more educational. This could stem from a difference in usage: Attorneys are more likely to turn to research reports for highly detailed information within their areas of knowledge, while a conference setting with presentations across a range of topics is more likely to provide information on unfamiliar topics. It's also possible that combining these two content types – where research findings are at the heart of a strong in-person event – can lead to the best of both worlds.

METHODOLOGY

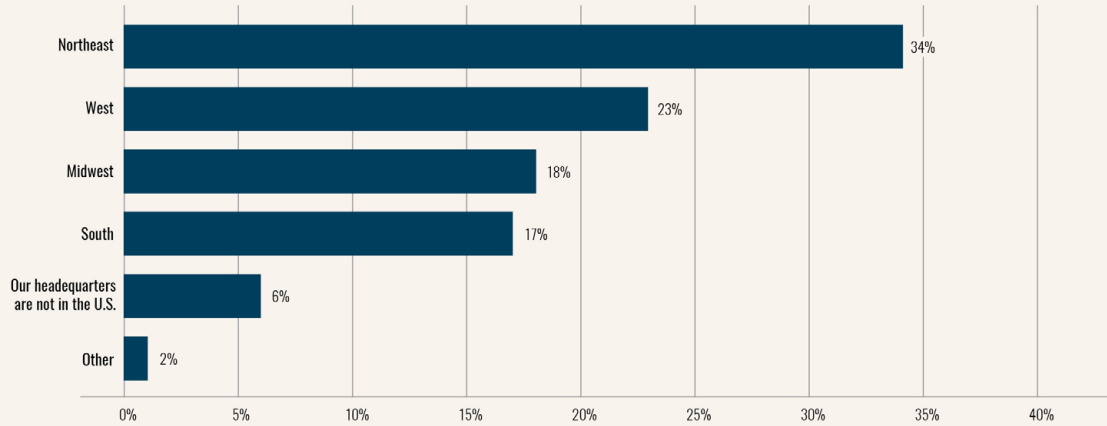
In the first quarter of 2018, Greentarget and Zeughausen Group distributed individual surveys to corporate in-house counsel. The results were tabulated, analyzed and released in June 2018. Eighty-five corporate counsel responded to the survey, 51 percent of whom were from companies with 2017 revenues of \$10 billion or more; 72 percent worked for companies with 5,000 or more employees. A plurality of 34 percent were from companies in the Northeastern United States.

Percentages in certain questions exceed 100 percent because respondents were asked to check all that apply. Due to rounding, percentages used in some questions may not add up to 100 percent.

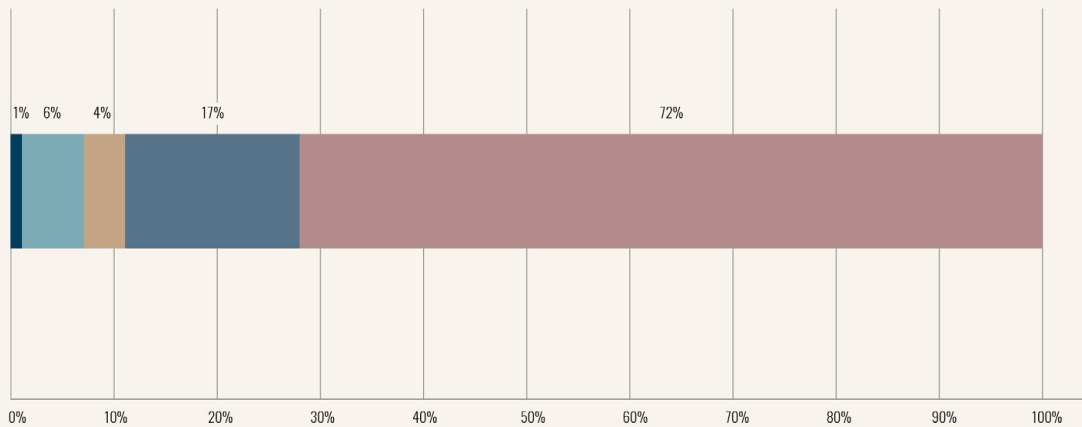
What were the FY 2017 revenues of your company?



Where is your company headquartered?



How many people does your company employ?



● 0-100 ● 100-500 ● 500-1,000 ● 1,000-5,000 ● 5,000+

About Us

ABOUT GREENTARGET

Greentarget is a strategic public relations firm focused exclusively on the communications needs of highly competitive business-to-business organizations. We counsel those who counsel the world's leading businesses and direct smarter conversations among their most important audiences to help deepen the relationships that impact the long-term value of their organizations.

www.greentarget.com

ABOUT ZEUGHAUSER GROUP

Zeughauser Group is the firm of choice for legal industry leaders seeking to increase competitive advantage and profitability, enhance market position and strengthen organizational culture.

www.consultzg.com

