



## “Tips for Working with the Trade Press”

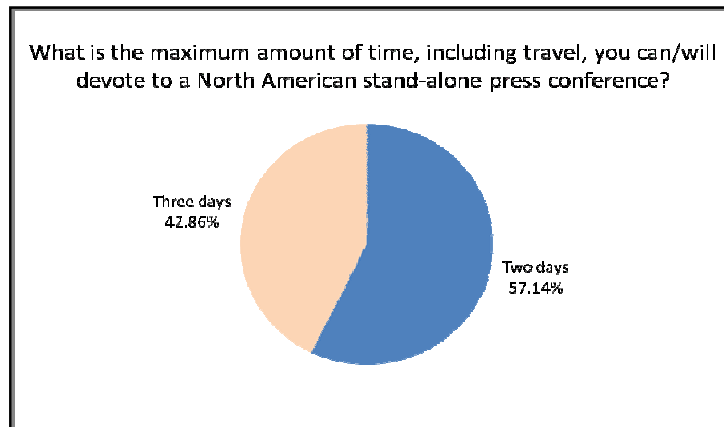
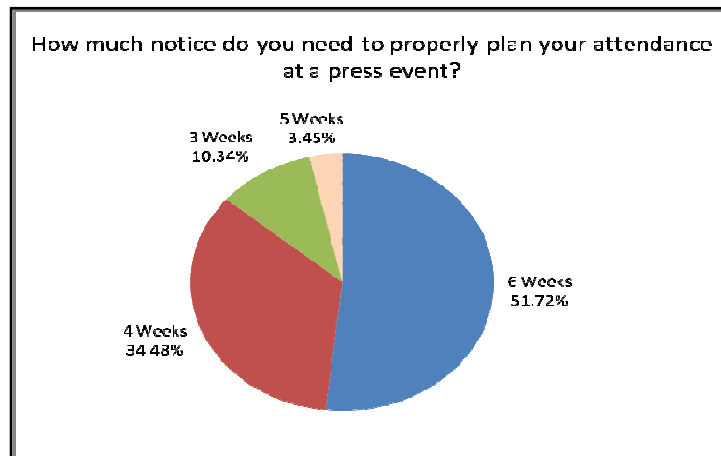
### *AEM/PICA Trade Press Relations Survey*

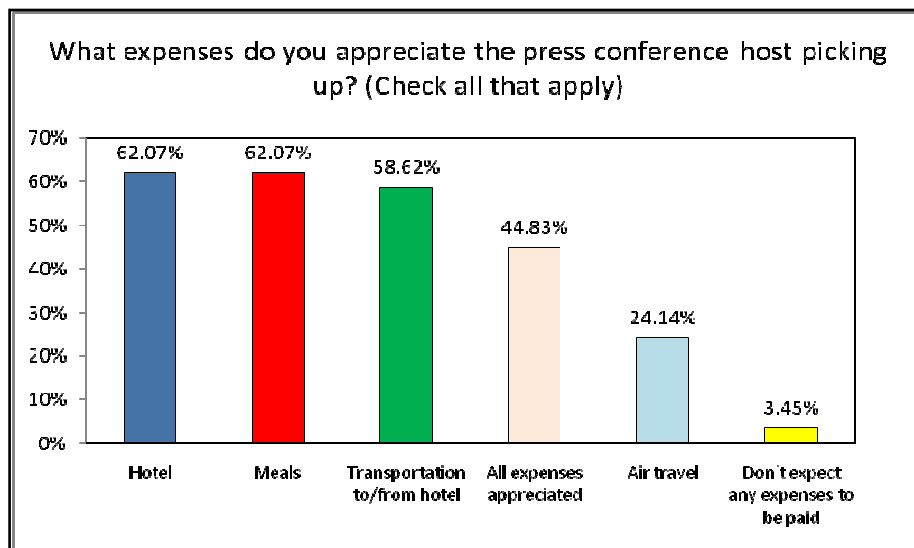
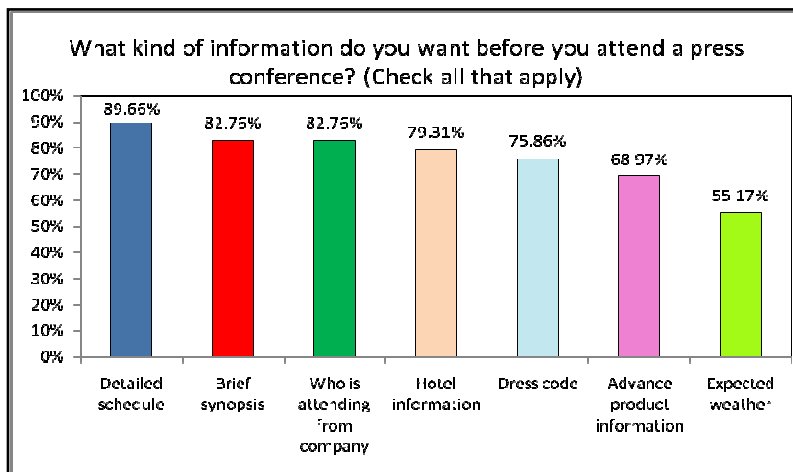
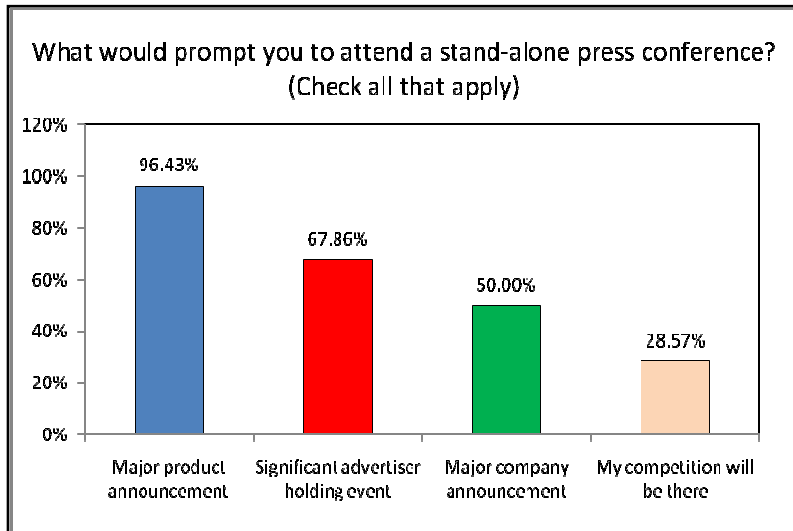
As an industry service to manufacturers and others who provide editorial materials to trade media, AEM’s Publications in Construction and Agriculture (PICA) group recently conducted an update to its “**Tips for Working Effectively with the Trade Press**” survey.

In this periodic survey, the editors of PICA member publications answer questions on subjects including press events, press kits, trade show-related press activities and press relations in general.

Below is a snapshot look at results. However, the numbers alone don’t tell the whole story. In many cases, editors may respond to what they would prefer in a perfect-world scenario. However, in reality, editors are quite flexible. They have always and will continue to work with marketers to provide the most complete, accurate and up-to-date information as possible to readers.

### PRESS EVENTS - Planning

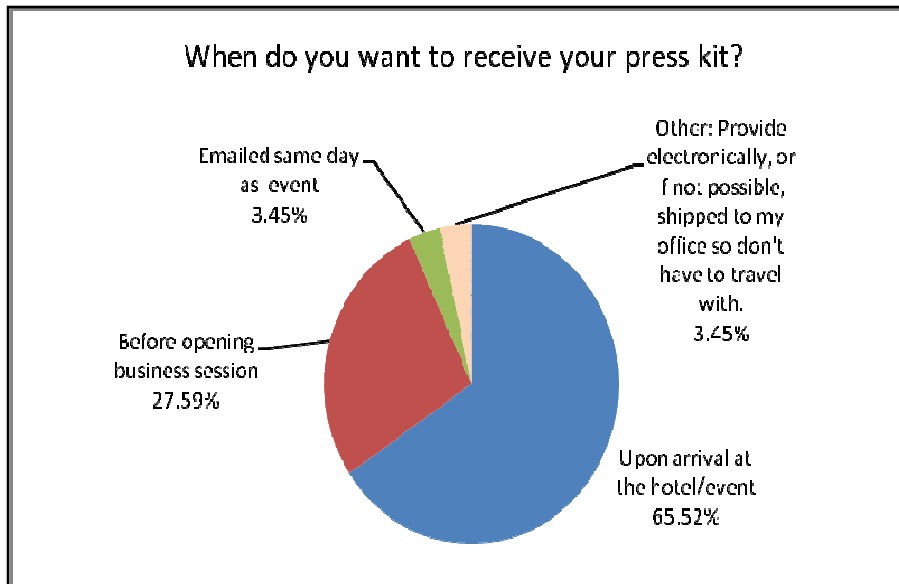




**COMMENTS – Any other comments on press event timing, expenses, set-up, etc.?**

- *Note:* The most common theme in comments was give as much advance notice as possible for planning purposes so editors can arrange their schedules; the later the invitation, the greater the risk of a conflict which could mean being unable to attend.
- Avoid holding an event within a week or two of a major industry show or convention.
- I'm not a fan of press events scheduled immediately before or after trade shows.
- Send as much CLEAR information as you can in the initial invite; specify from the get-go what expenses will be covered, what time attendees need to arrive, and when they can leave. Our travel budgets are tight and we need prior OKs so the more information we have, the better we can get approval (and obviously, the cheaper the trip will be for us, the more likely we'll get approval to attend.)
- It's not always possible for the company to pay for all event travel, but helping a little goes a long way. Picking up the hotel helps a lot, and it avoids the problem of where to stay in the area. If air travel, etc is not covered, I need a lot of lead time to clear it with the powers that be.
- In the current economic environment, travel expenses to a stand-alone event factor into our decision-making.
- Unlikely to be able to justify travel to the USA from the UK for one press event whether one or four days, even if it is all paid for.
- Generally, most press event hosts have a good handle on what's appropriate and what's not.
- Stand-alone events should be announced 2 months prior at least.
- Under better circumstances I would expect to pay travel expenses, but at the moment if an event is not in my budget, the only way in which I can accommodate it is to remove something else.
- For venue, useful to be near an international airport as we are based in the UK.

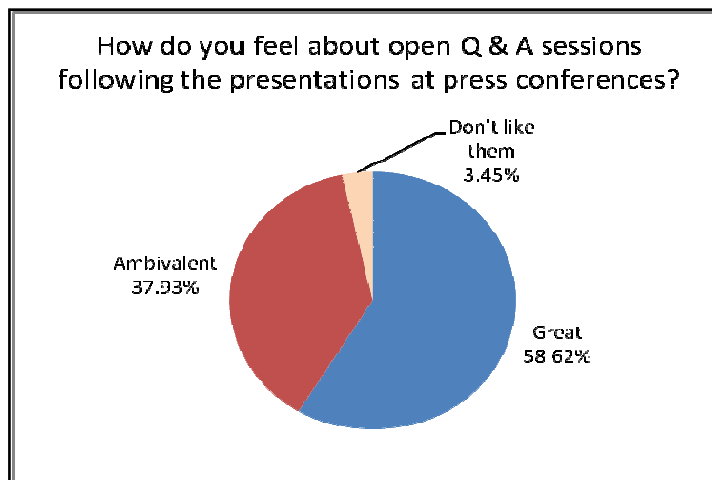
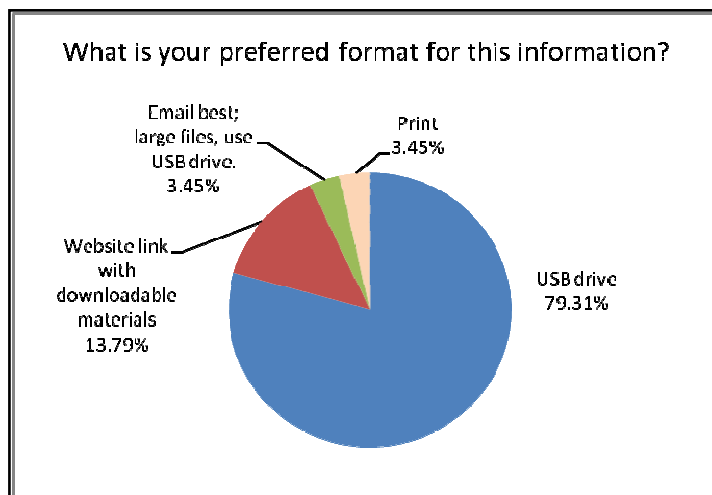
**PRESS EVENTS – At the Event**

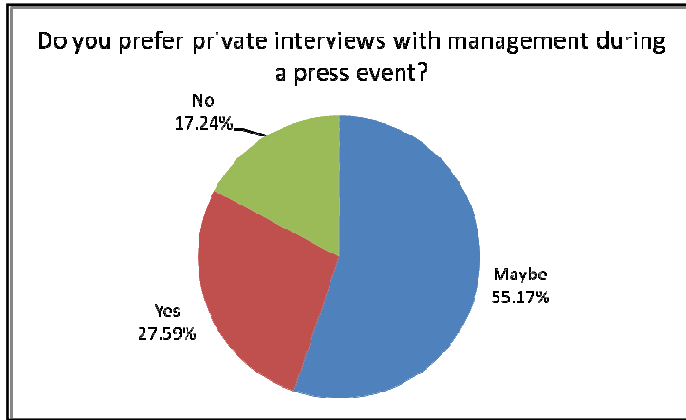




What kind of information do you want in your press kit? (Check all that apply)

96.55%	Photos on CD or USB drive
93.10%	Product release
89.66%	Product information on CD or USB drive
82.76%	Detailed schedule
79.31%	Product specifications
68.97%	Attendance list
68.97%	Website URL for downloadable press releases, photos
44.83%	Speakers' bio/photo
41.38%	Speaker PowerPoint presentations
41.38%	Videos
37.93%	Speaker transcript
20.69%	Company's social media links
17.24%	Company history
3.45%	Printed photos
	Other: (1) Prefer electronic media kits (2) The less I have to carry the better (3) E-mail releases; Put large files (photos, PPTs) out on USB drive and hand out.





What are your most significant press event pet peeves? (Check all that apply)

86.21%	Lack of significance or purpose
62.07%	Lack of warning
55.17%	Held in difficult-to-reach location
41.38%	Held at inconvenient time
37.93%	Boring presentations
34.48%	Embargoed information
34.48%	Too little information
3.45%	Too much crammed into too short a timeframe
	Other: (1) Excessive PowerPoint use (2) Event held because competition holding one (3) Too much material to travel with/take back to office

**COMMENTS – Any other comments on press event content, materials, etc.?**

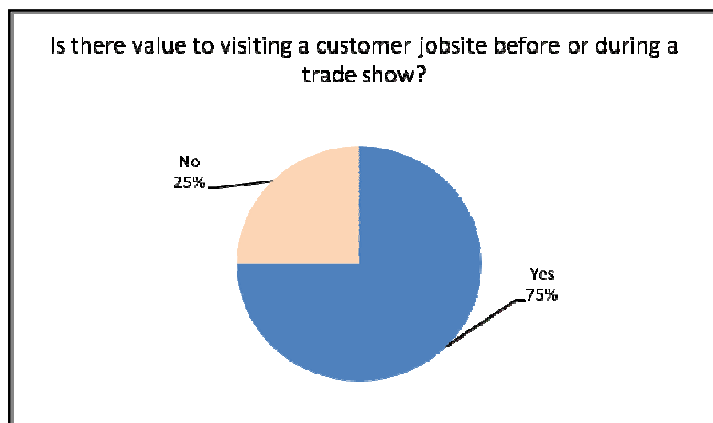
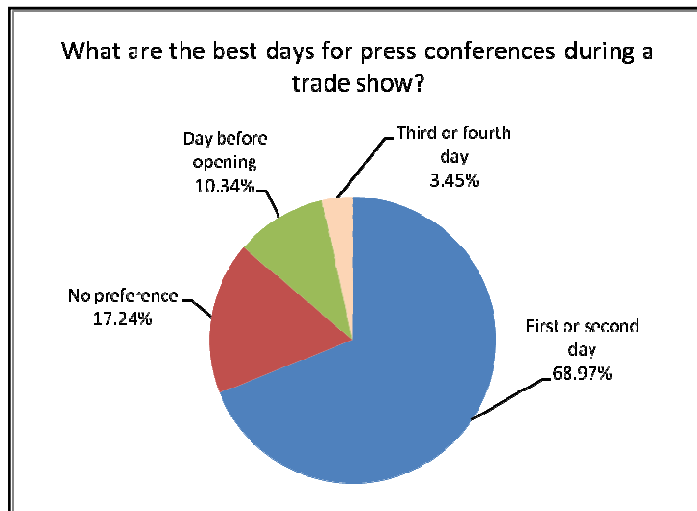
- It's the worst when you've rearranged schedule to fly to out-of -the-way location and then feel like no one is saying anything interesting or useful. Don't bring us all together unless you have something truly impressive/meaningful to present – something new and interesting for our readers.
- Think they are very valuable, good opportunity to meet the people who are doing the work in this industry, and to touch the iron.
- When sending a press release and photos, please also send release as attachment; saves me cut-and-paste-into-another-document time. Also I detest having to go to a website for a news release and photos - waste of time.
- One rule to always remember when organizing a press event: Attendees must be able to justify the time spent away from their offices, so please make sure the event is warranted.
- Hands-on experience with equipment is very valuable. Also need contact information for relevant company officials.
- In these tough economic times it is more important than ever for events to be relevant to our readers and it certainly helps when all costs (even airfare) are included.
- At shows avoid scheduling two or more conferences at the same time.
- Prefer opportunity to meet with event presenters later in more relaxed setting to ask questions specific to my magazines. Only questions before whole group should be to clear up confusion.
- I now travel with a Netbook and they can't accept CDs, so a USB drive is much appreciated.
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## TRADE SHOWS – Press Events

Give your general impression of the following:

Location press conference	Positive	Ambivalent	Negative
Press conference room near press room	86.2%	13.8%	-
Press conference on trade show floor before show hours	51.7%	27.6%	20.7%
Press conference on trade show floor during show hours	58.6%	24.1%	17.2%
Press conference on trade show floor after show hours	24.1%	31.0%	44.8%
Night press conference held off site	17.2%	37.9%	44.8%
Press conference held in another city right before trade show begins	-	27.6%	72.4%

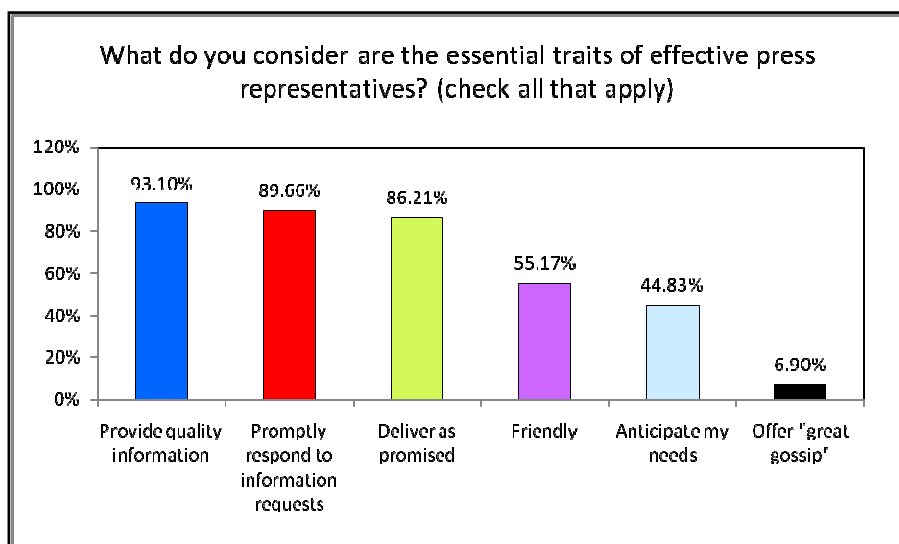


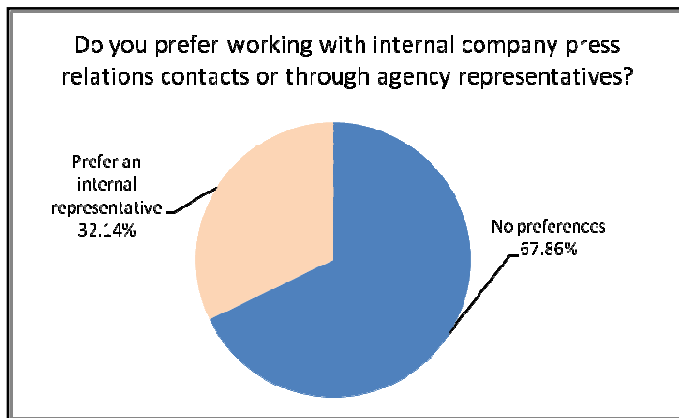


**COMMENTS – Any other comments on press events at trade shows or press event scheduling?**

- An exhibitor shouldn't schedule both a press conference and one-on-one booth visits. Booth visits should be at editor discretion. Sometimes you feel pressured into saying yes and then find the information has little or no value or they want you to interview the company president or the like.
- It's nice to have somewhere to sit down during a trade show (booth) press conference. We do a lot of running and standing at the shows.
- With so many products and people to see at a show, keeping events concise is always appreciated. If they go over a meal time, offering snacks is helpful way for us to keep working without a break.
- I checked ambivalent about after-hour press events because, depending on the show, editors can be exhausted by then and will already be carrying around a full, heavy briefcase. I marked a nighttime off-premises press conference the same, but it's not a bad idea if it involves dinner and some relaxation at the same time, and allows the editor time to unwind before it kicks off.
- Too often press event organizers seem to forget we're there to cover show, too. If you don't have anything newsworthy to release, please don't hold a press conference.
- The biggest challenge is spectrum of conference times. Of options listed, I've seen them all. Many of us attend show events from 6 a.m. until late in the evening. Most of the time, the information could be put on a USB drive or downloaded from a website. What's important is interaction with the staff/engineers/marketing people, and I prefer that one on one, rather than as a press event.
- You go to a trade show to see all relevant exhibitors, not to be monopolized by one who captures you and takes you away from the show and hogs all your attention.
- Please try to keep press events on or as close to the show site as possible.
- Press conference hosts should recognize that the true beneficiaries are our readers and that presentations should focus as much on customer benefits as on product features. The best events give me the feeling that I'm being treated as an "insider."
- Please stop doing breakfast press conferences. Timing is inconvenient and makes the day too long.
- A number of editors leave on the third day, so Day 1 or Day 2 is a better bet.

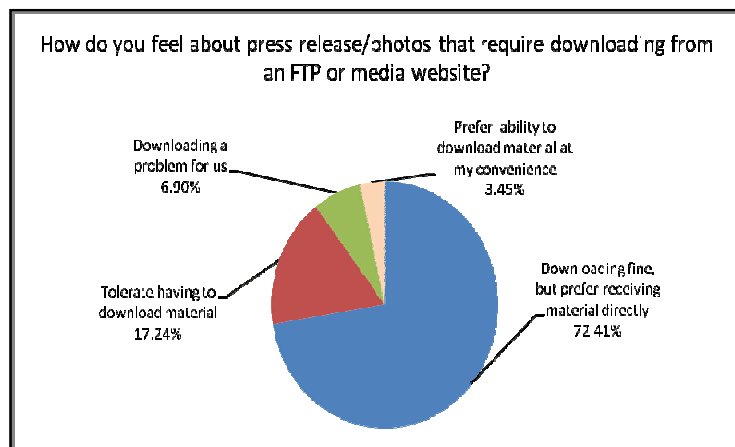
**PRESS RELATIONS**

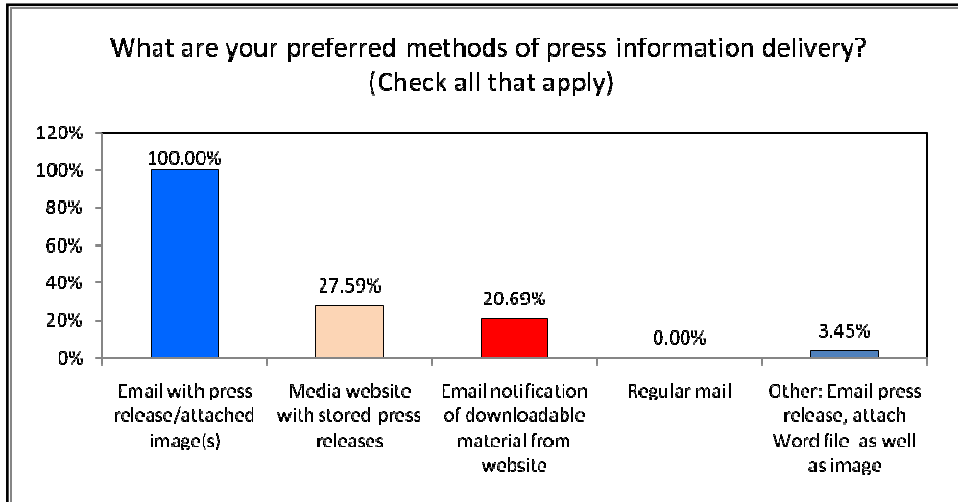




**COMMENTS – Any other comments to add about PR professionals?**

- Internal or agency rep doesn't matter; what really frustrates me is when I'm not allowed to speak to individual (e.g., product manager) I'm seeking information from. I understand company policy to control information, but I am willing to let my copy be reviewed after interview with an internal contact. I just prefer to ask my own questions and take my own interview notes.
- The best PR professional is a proactive PR rep. We are asked to cover an entire industry, not just one company. If PR reps can be proactive and send us information instead of us having to search for it and waste time throughout our day, you're more likely to get page time.
- When a press release is sent from a PR company, it needs to include contact information for the company that makes the product, not just PR company contact info.
- PR people who return phone calls and actually help track down sources and information for an article are really well liked.
- Agency reps can be equally as helpful as internal reps ... and vice-versa.
- It's infuriating to have to go through a PR professional to get contact with a company official, such as after conducting an interview and having a follow-up question.
- The key is the person and his/her knowledge, energy, enthusiasm, commitment, and good access to experts. Company or agency, there's no substitute for experience. I like to think that the representatives I work with know what I am looking for even if I'm not able to verbalize it.
- A good press person not only looks at my editorial calendar but considers my magazines when they want to explore a different story angle, or especially an exclusive.



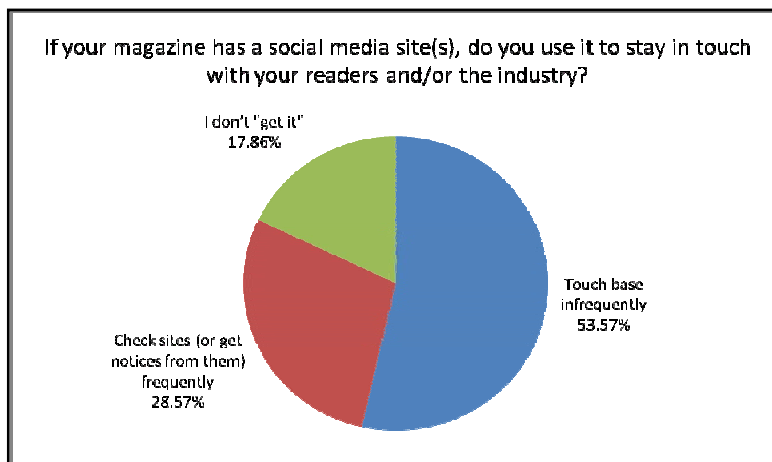
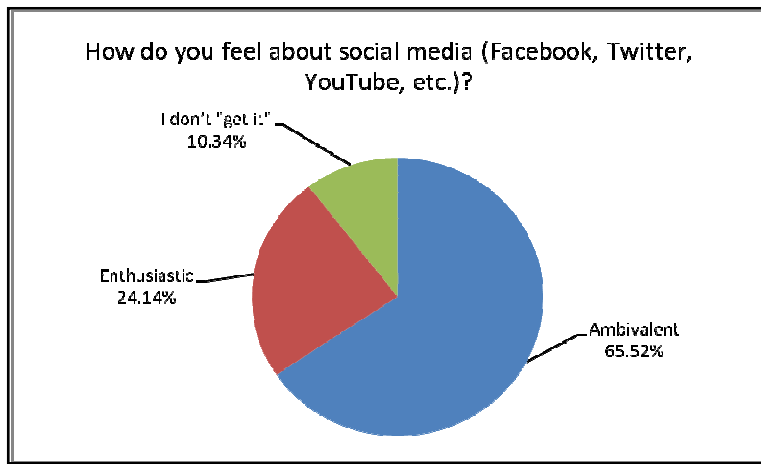


**What are your biggest press release gripes? (Check all that apply)**

82.76%	Release sent with no photo
58.62%	Emailed links to website home page and not directly to press release
55.17%	Emailed attachments with no information on what attachment contains
48.28%	Inadequate description of product/service
48.28%	No contact information
44.83%	No date on the release
27.59%	Too much technical jargon
	Other: (1): Self-serving verbosity (2) Too much information (3) Photos without captions (4) No company location (5) Incredibly long releases (go on for pages). (6) Holding back photos/information as pretext to phone, solicit interest; material of possible interest only if all there

**COMMENTS – Any other comments on press information content, delivery, etc.?**

- Ending a press event several hours earlier than posted in schedule. When such an event ends at 1 PM instead of 4, for example, it's usually too late or too expensive to change flights, schedules.
- Overly long press releases just make more editing work for me. If you don't want certain information to get cut, put it at the beginning.
- It astounds me there are still PR agencies that not only do not know to send hi-res quality images, but when one is requested, don't know what that means.
- If you don't send a photo, please be prepared to send one when asked. Please take the time to understand focus of the magazine when compiling lists.
- Another pet peeve is PR folks who send mass releases without ensuring relevance to the market. It's a quick way to get blocked from my email. Good releases should capture a product's important features and relevance to my readers in the first sentence or two.
- Don't force me to go through several steps to find out what you're promoting. A simple emailed release with photo always works best.
- Images make press items more interesting. Don't make it a chore to get a picture.
- *Note:* Several additional comments indicated that photo images should be high-resolution quality.



**COMMENTS – Any other comments on social media?**

- I use social media to get website info out but am concerned too many companies view it as replacement for print ads – ex: AEM annual meeting (speaker) emphasis on social networking as vehicle for communicating product information with customers. Lack of print ad revenue is causing many magazines to reduce size, content, coverage. In end this will hurt the industry.
- It's still in its infancy stage for professional use, but I'm excited to be a part of its growth. I feel the important thing is to offer parallel information from magazine, website, etc. but also provide an added benefit to being a part of the social networks to entice people to visit.
- Our magazine now has an editor that handles our social media.
- It is a load of crap at the moment but then hey, most things are these days and nobody yet knows what it may blossom into so you have to be "in it to win it," etc.
- This is still gray area for many companies - a great asset, but don't make it something to rely on.
- Too much frivolous information.
- For most part an interruptive activity, but I have to admit that I don't need to feel connected.
- Level of adoption in construction and construction equipment industries seems very low. As such, it doesn't seem worth bothering with social media at present.
- This is still big question of applicability, especially when I look at demographics and preferences of my readers. Still, something this big needs our attention.



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## ESSAY QUESTIONS

*(Editors had the opportunity to provide additional commentary to 2 questions.)*

### **What area of public relations/trade press relations would you like to see improved in the off-road equipment industry, and how?**

- Know your market. Don't blanket-send press releases to magazines that are not in your market. That's a waste of both the magazine and vendor time and money.
- I'd like a realization that magazines cannot exist without support. Everyone wants their product information posted or published and don't seem to understand that without a revenue stream, this activity cannot go on. In tough economic times, the first dollars that get saved are ad and marketing dollars and when magazines start shrinking in physical size, content and coverage, these same people complain because their releases didn't get in or posted. The trade press is a critical component of an industry; it provides a valuable service to end users; it remains a great way to communicate with the customer.
- I would like to see PR professionals take a partnership approach in their interactions with editors. Strong relationships coupled with regular, effective communication prove to be mutually beneficial. It's also important to ensure product information is regularly updated to ensure accuracy - particularly for online databases - and continued usage in print publications.
- General press releases from agencies that have no relevance to the magazine are very irritating. It would be nice if PR agents took the time to get to know the magazines /industries they are sending information to. When you receive one too many bland unrelated press releases, the source loses credibility and we stop answering the phone and utilizing the sent information as junk.
- Afraid to see this part of the business go away due to budget cuts, etc. Press events are valuable, and typically generate the best articles when compared to an e-mailed press release or being there in person.
- I would prefer not having to set artificial deadlines and follow up three times to get material that was promised earlier.
- Press releases are often written in far too laudatory a tone for use in magazines, and need to be edited heavily to remove the glowing terms. Followup calls: one is usually fine. Multiple followup calls just to check on whether a release was received and when it will be run can be annoying.
- Lots of relevant companies exhibiting at shows have no press information, especially prior to the show. Then, during it, all they have is a brochure and nobody who can tell you why product is so great or why people should buy it.
- None really. This industry has it down very well, much better than others.
- Provide images and distribute material in a convenient manner, and it will be used.
- Informative articles that are not self-promoting.
- I'd like to see more understanding in the industry of how vital the trade press is to contractors, in whatever form the information takes.

### **What advice do you have to offer companies planning press events for CONEXPO-CON/AGG 2011 or other large trade shows?**

- Keep it simple. Tell us what you're going to do and then do it. No need for a fancy tap dance.
- Speak to your competitors to ensure your events don't clash.
- Coordinate press conference scheduling. Don't have press conferences of similar subjects and/or vendors overlapping.

*(more)*



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*(Cont) What advice do you have to offer companies planning press events for CONEXPO-CON/AGG 2011 or other large trade shows?*

- Let the press know about the event well in advance. Provide details on what will be covered, information on logistics relative to the event, worthwhile information and material. Have handout materials - USB press kits because they're easy to transport and print materials so that I can take notes during the presentations. During shows allow time in between press conferences for editors to get from one place to another.
- If you plan one, show up for it.
- Don't waste an editor's time-plan a short event and provide meaningful information. E-mail us the information directly the same day of the event. That will get you the best coverage.
- Pay attention to press event schedule to minimize overlap. Provide plenty of advance notice, particularly events before/after show hours. And make sure the event has significance/ substance. Failure to do so eats up valuable time; may cause resentment toward the company.
- Please be considerate of our time and keep press events brief and to the point. A 2-hour press event with 30 minutes of information has wasted 1.5 hours of our day. Setting aside time for personal interviews seems like a good idea, but simply providing contact information and a brief job description/title of person will offer enough information for us to follow up at our leisure.
- Don't wait till week right before the show to send out press conference invites. Send them early.
- Understand that there is a lot to do and a lot of walking between points A and B. Don't just hold a press conference because your competitor is. If you do, don't forget the food or interesting give-aways! Keep amount of time to a minimum.
- Make sure you actually have new products or services to discuss. It leaves a negative impression if it is a large trade show that is difficult to cover and the news conference ends up being more of a social gathering than a real event.
- Consider location carefully when planning events - last show I had to go from one end (of center) to the other for back to back events. Keep in mind that editors have finite luggage space for material for the trip home - big packages for press kits can be a real challenge. USB preferable if possible.
- Please don't schedule them the days immediately prior to or after the tradeshow.
- Start planning now, contact editors ASAP prior to show as schedule fills up fast.
- Do anything you can to send relevant and concise text, a choice of good quality high resolution images and full contact details all in one e-mail under a clear subject line.
- Only schedule a press event if you have something truly significant to say. The time for editors is much too valuable to waste, especially today. Otherwise, leave your press materials in the press room and trust they will be considered.
- Contact early and often to get attendance confirmation.
- Be aware of time and distance constraints. At finish line there should be payback of a worthwhile presentation. This goes back to what I said earlier about beneficiaries (readers). If all I get is presentation by amateur who beats drum for his product for 45 minutes, nobody wins.

**For more information on PICA and its activities, contact AEM (Pat Monroe 414-298-4123, [pmonroe@aem.org](mailto:pmonroe@aem.org)).**

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