

You Have the Data: Use It.

What Journalists Want from Supply Chain PR in 2026

A LeadCoverage Analysis of the 2026 Cision State of the Media Report – examining what the data means specifically for supply chain, freight technology, and logistics companies executing earned media programs in 2026.

MARKET ANALYSIS

MAY 2026



Executive Summary

Cision surveyed **1,899 journalists across 19 markets** in January and February 2026. The resulting State of the Media Report is the most detailed account of how working journalists receive, evaluate, and reject PR outreach available to communications professionals. Its findings are not ambiguous. Journalists are overwhelmed, under-resourced, deeply skeptical of AI-generated content, and increasingly dependent on PR-provided material as a primary source for story ideas.

1,899

Journalists Surveyed

Across 19 global markets, Jan–Feb 2026

66%

Rely on PR Content

As their top source for story ideas

72%

Relevance Gap

Say fewer than 25% of pitches are relevant

53%

Oppose AI Pitches

Opposed to AI-generated PR pitches

For companies that treat earned media as a revenue function

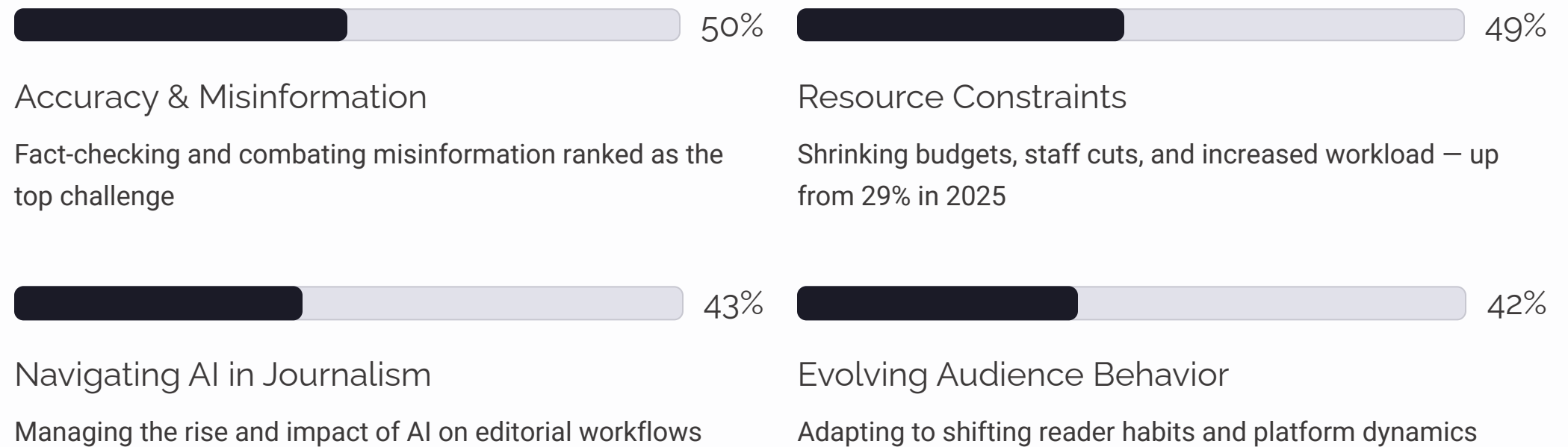
The data is instructive. Supply chain companies with proprietary data, relevant expert commentary, and genuine news to communicate have a real and durable edge – if they use it correctly.

Key Findings at a Glance

- Journalists are more dependent on PR content than at any prior point in the survey's history – yet the relevance gap is wider than ever
- More than half of journalists oppose AI-generated pitches, with direct implications for supply chain communications strategy
- The content journalists most want is also the content most likely to drive AI visibility
- Practitioner quotes in the report serve as a direct brief for running an earned media program in this market

The Newsroom in 2026: What Journalists Are Actually Dealing With

Journalists are more resource-constrained than at any point since this survey began. Nearly half of all respondents – **49 percent** – cited resource constraints including shrinking budgets, staff cuts, and increased workload as their biggest challenge over the prior twelve months. That figure was 29 percent in 2025, a **69 percent increase in one year**.



i A press release is not a document designed to inform a journalist about your company. It is raw material that reduces the work a journalist has to do to produce a story. A journalist producing more content with fewer resources is not reading long pitches; they are deleting what does not immediately serve them. Serve them up the good stuff!

"The reporters covering freight and logistics in 2026 are doing the jobs that used to be done by two or three people. The pitch that makes their work easier is the pitch that gets covered. Everything else is inbox noise." – **Will Haraway, Co-Founder and CSO, LeadCoverage**

The Relevance Problem and What It Costs

The most damaging finding for companies running undifferentiated PR programs is the relevance data. Most journalists receive more than 50 pitches per week. **72 percent report that fewer than a quarter are relevant.** 82 percent say irrelevance is their primary reason for rejecting a pitch outright.

The Math

If a journalist receives 50 pitches and considers 25% relevant, they evaluate roughly **12**. If your pitch is one of the 37 they delete without reading, the quality of your content never gets evaluated. Relevance is the gate – quality only matters after you pass through it.

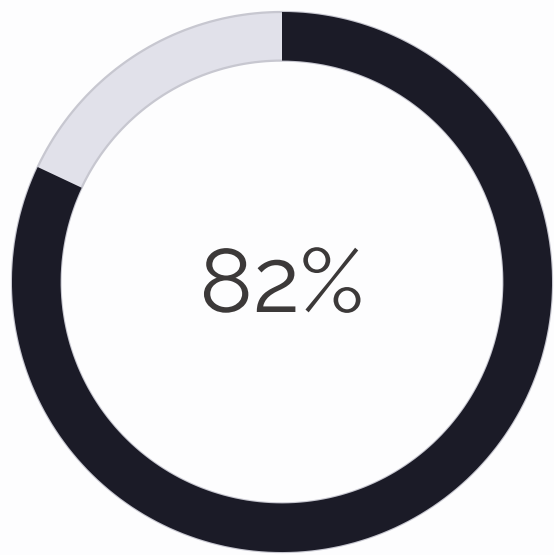
What Journalists Want More Of

- **47%** – Data or research
- **45%** – Embargoed or early access information
- **42%** – Access to experts and interview opportunities
- **33%** – Credible data that makes them more likely to engage

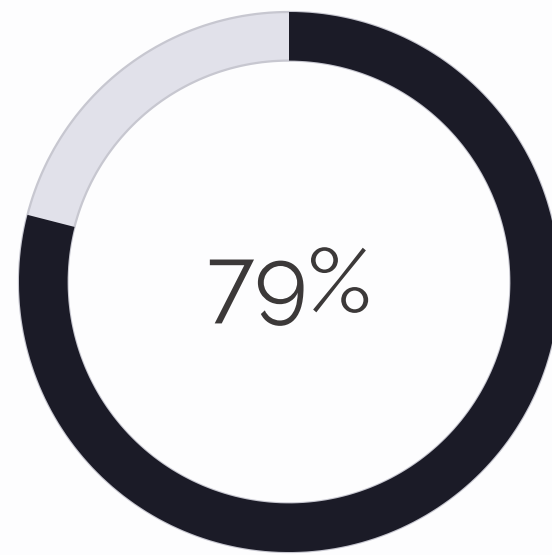
The Supply Chain Data Advantage

Supply chain companies generate proprietary data continuously – and this is a structural editorial advantage that no communications firm can fabricate on their behalf:

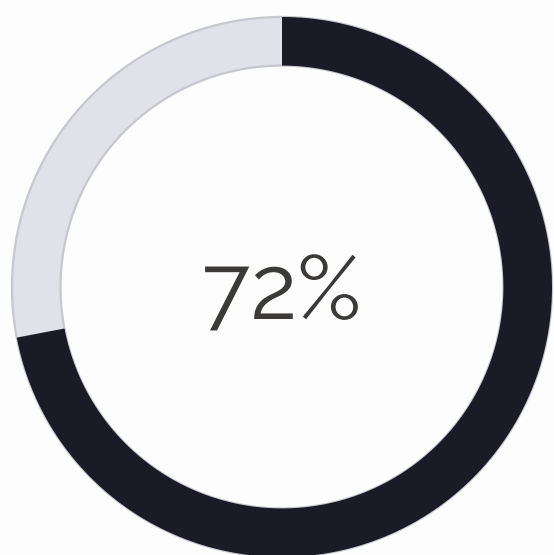
<p>Lane Rates & Tender Acceptance</p> <p>Real-time freight market signals with verifiable sourcing</p>	<p>Load-to-Truck Ratios</p> <p>Carrier capacity signals journalists can cite and verify</p>
<p>Port Dwell Times</p> <p>Disruption data with direct editorial relevance to trade coverage</p>	<p>Routing Volatility</p> <p>Chemical feedstock disruptions and network instability metrics</p>



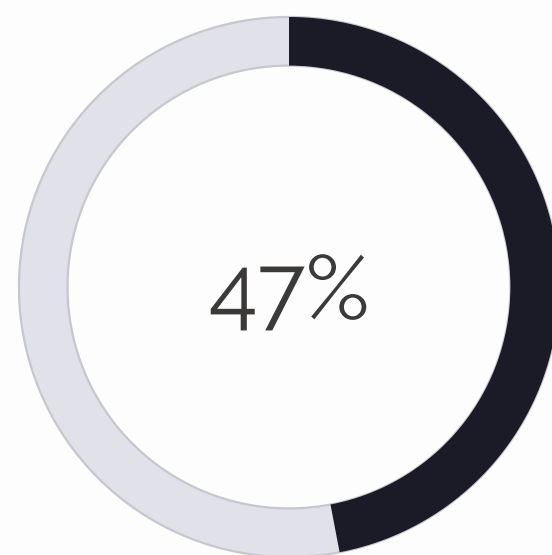
Reject Irrelevant Pitches
Primary reason for outright rejection



Engage Beat-Aligned Pitches
Most likely to engage when pitch matches their coverage area



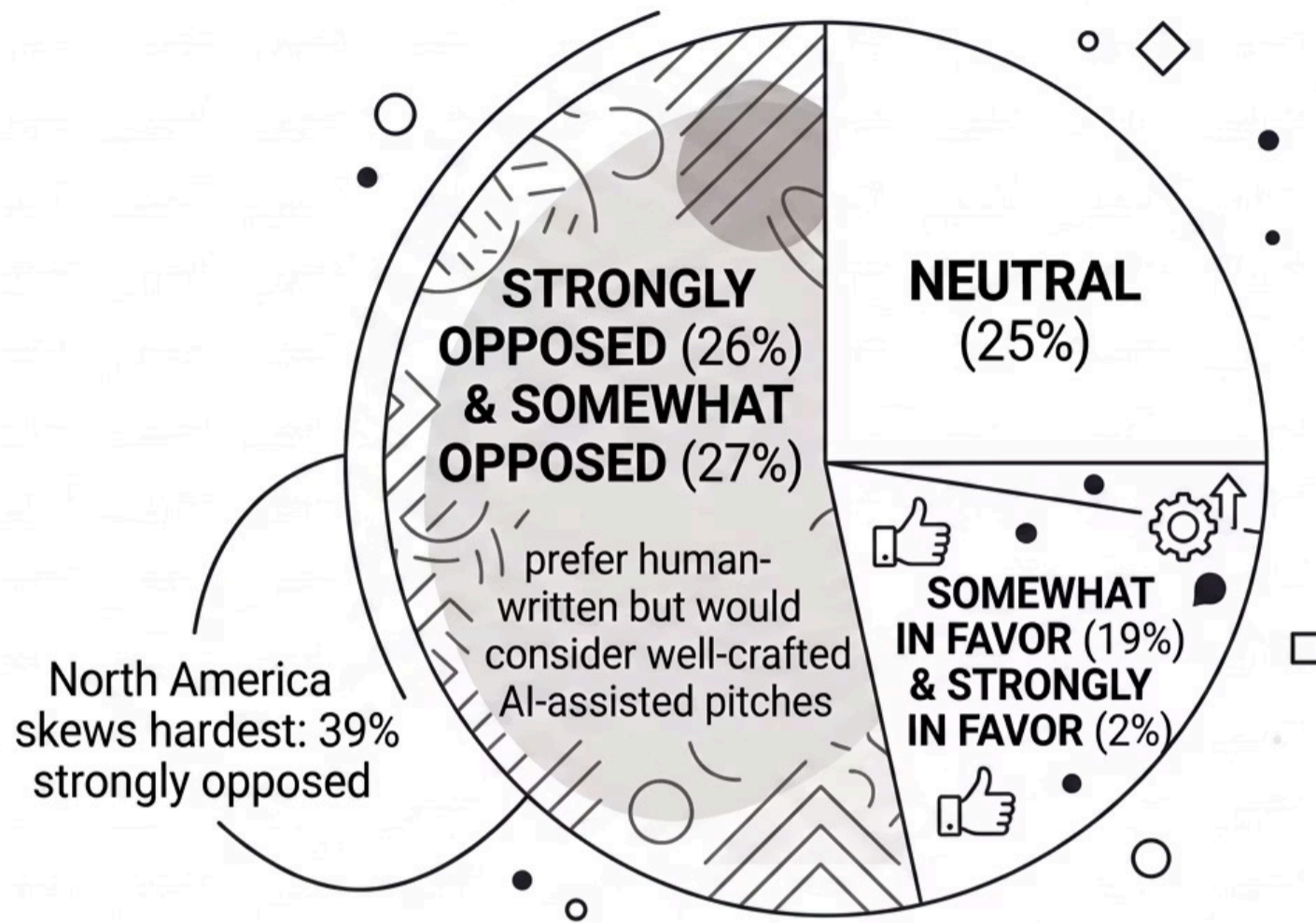
Under 25% Relevant
Share of journalists who find fewer than a quarter of pitches relevant



Want More Data
Journalists who specifically request more data and research from PR

The AI Question in Earned Media

The headline – that more than half of journalists oppose AI-generated pitches – is frequently misread. The data is more nuanced and more useful than the summary suggests. Journalists oppose *spam, low-quality writing, and lack of personalization* – not AI as a technology.



How Journalists Use AI Themselves

- 48% — Brainstorming
Story angles, headlines, and interview questions
- 43% — Research & Fact-Checking
Accelerating verification workflows
- 41% — Transcription & Summarization
Logistics and efficiency tasks
- 27% — Content Creation
The least common use — journalists are not using AI to write

The LLM Citation Connection

94% of B2B buyers now use LLMs during their buying process. Muck Rack's Generative Pulse research found that non-paid media sources account for approximately **94% of all AI-cited links**.

Earned media placements in supply chain trade publications don't just build brand awareness — they become retrieval sources for the AI systems that buyers use to build vendor shortlists before they ever contact sales.

- ✓ The path from earned media program → LLM citation → buyer shortlist runs through the same quality standards the Cision data describes.

"Journalists are using AI the same way good PR teams should be using it: to do the heavy lifting on research and logistics so the human brain can focus on what actually requires one. The mistake is letting AI write the pitch instead of prepare the person who writes it." — **Will Haraway**

What Journalists Want: In Their Own Words

The qualitative sections of the Cision report – where journalists answer open-ended questions about what PR professionals could do better – are as analytically valuable as the quantitative data. These are direct briefs for how to run an earned media program in this market.

“
On Accuracy and Sourced Claims
"Don't rely blindly on AI platforms. If you use them, go back and verify/fact-check data and information as a human being. Source your material where able, so journalists can independently verify it more easily."
”

“
On Personalization and Beat Knowledge
"I love when PR professionals reference my past stories and offer sources, new information or other angles to move the coverage forward."
”

“
On Relationship Building
"Too many PR professionals pitch me without ever learning who I am or what I do. If they can't be bothered to craft a real relationship, then I can't be bothered to respond."
”

“
On Amplification as Partnership
"Support writers, advocate for us... Have people in the coverage share and amplify the earned media and the writer."
”

- ❏ For supply chain companies: a press release built around proprietary lane rate data with a clear methodology note is more verifiable than one built around a survey of undisclosed respondents. Sourcing is not a formality – it is a competitive differentiator.

"An earned media placement that nobody at your company shares is a tree falling in a forest. The journalists who wrote it notice. The buyers you were trying to reach never see it. Amplification is not a courtesy. It is part of the contract." – **Will Haraway**

The Mechanics of Effective Pitching

Knowing what journalists want is only half the equation. The other half is understanding the precise mechanics — word count, channel, follow-up cadence, and the specific triggers that cause a pitch to be deleted before it is read.

Word Count by Pitch Type

Pitch Type	Preferred Length
Breaking news / timely announcement	100–200 words (32% prefer)
Feature or story idea	100–300 words
Event announcement	Under 100 words (34% prefer)
Newly released data or research	200–400+ words acceptable

Channel and Follow-Up

- **97%** of journalists prefer email as the primary channel
- **64%** want only one follow-up after a pitch
- **28%** want no follow-up at all
- **52%** expect a response within 24 hours when they reach out

Top Pitch Rejection Triggers

82% — Not Relevant

Not relevant to audience or coverage area — the single biggest killer

53% — Too Promotional

Leads with company positioning language instead of news

34% — No News Angle

No clear news angle or point of view established

27% — Too Generic


Mass-email feel with no personalization signals

20% — Insufficient Information

Not enough detail to evaluate or act on the pitch

16% — Too Long

Too long to read quickly in a high-volume inbox

 **The promotional tone problem:** More than half of journalists will delete a pitch that leads with company positioning language. Leads should carry the news, stated specifically, with a number when one exists. Company positioning belongs in the boilerplate — not the headline.

LinkedIn and the Journalist Relationship

LinkedIn is now the dominant professional platform for journalists globally – cited by **62%** as their most frequently used professional social media channel, and ranked as the single most valuable platform by **33% of journalists** across North America and EMEA.

Why Journalists Use Social Media



54% — Publish & Promote

To publish and promote their own content and build audience



37% — Crowdsourcing Information

To find sources and gather information for active stories



37% — Interact with Audience

To engage readers and build editorial community



28% — Trending Topics

To pick up on emerging stories and market signals

How to Build the Relationship

84% of journalists prefer a simple email introduction as the first contact from a PR professional – far ahead of pitching a story idea (36%) or offering an event invitation (34%).

The Dual Payoff

Supply chain executives who are active on LinkedIn – publishing substantive commentary on freight market conditions, engaging with journalist content by adding context – are more accessible and credible sources than those who appear only when a press release goes out.

Muck Rack research found that brands appearing on **four or more platforms** are **2.8 times more likely** to appear in ChatGPT responses. The journalist relationship goal and the AI visibility goal are the same goal pursued through the same activity.

Five Implications for Supply Chain Earned Media Programs

The Cision data, read alongside the LC Analyst Relations white paper and Muck Rack's Generative Pulse research, resolves into five specific operational implications for supply chain companies running earned media programs in 2026.

1 The Relevance Tax Is Real

A supply chain company whose pitches consistently land in the irrelevant pile is not just missing coverage – it is damaging relationships with the reporters who cover its market. The fix: a media target list built on beat analysis, not circulation tier.

2 Data Ownership Is a Durable Competitive Edge

47% of journalists want more data and research. Supply chain companies generate proprietary data no communications firm can fabricate. Companies that translate this data into quarterly freight market reports, disruption impact analyses, and carrier performance benchmarks build the editorial assets journalists return to repeatedly.

3 AI-Assisted Does Not Mean AI-Written

The 53% journalist opposition does not ban AI from earned media workflows. It bans low-quality, impersonal output. AI should accelerate the research and workflow behind the program – not replace the judgment that makes the output worth reading.

4 Amplification Is a Deliverable, Not a Courtesy

Companies that secure earned media and don't amplify it leave three returns on the table simultaneously: journalist relationship equity, buyer audience reach, and AI citation potential. Amplification is a program deliverable with a measurable return.

5 Speed Is a Market Differentiator

Supply chain news moves fast – port disruptions, carrier failures, regulatory changes. The companies that earn coverage on big market events are the ones that built journalist relationships before the event happened, with named spokespeople and pre-approved talking points ready to deploy.

"In freight, the news does not wait for the press release to be approved; the companies that earn coverage on the big market events are the ones that built the journalist relationships before the event happened." – **Will Haraway, Co-Founder and CSO, LeadCoverage**

Conclusion: The Supply Chain Sector Is Positioned to Win

The 2026 Cision State of the Media Report is a clear description of the conditions under which earned media either functions as a revenue input or fails to function at all. Three findings deserve emphasis in the supply chain context.

The Relevance Gap Is Addressable

Supply chain companies with proprietary data, relevant expert commentary, and genuine news to communicate are not competing against well-constructed pitches from better-resourced competitors. They are competing against generic promotional content from companies that have not yet understood what journalists are actually trying to use their pitches for.

The AI Question Resolves Clearly

Journalists oppose AI-generated pitches for the same reasons they oppose bad pitches: impersonality, lack of sourcing, low informational value. The Muck Rack data establishes simultaneously that earned media produced with genuine news value is the primary input to AI-generated vendor recommendations.

The Sector Has the Raw Material

47% of journalists want more data and research. Supply chain generates it continuously. The companies that build sustainable earned media programs are the ones that have figured out how to translate that data into external content journalists can use, verify, and return to.

About LeadCoverage

LeadCoverage is the premier supply chain go-to-market consulting group, dedicated to driving revenue growth for freight brokers, logistics technology companies, and 4PLs. As a HubSpot Diamond Partner, LeadCoverage specializes in earned media strategy, analyst relations, and go-to-market programs grounded in data-backed insights. The firm publishes the Supply Chain Growth Index and the Logistics Growth Efficiency Ratio Index quarterly.

[LEADCOVERAGE.COM](https://leadcoverage.com)

Sources: Cision 2026 State of the Media Report | LeadCoverage Analyst Relations as a Revenue Engine (April 2026) | Muck Rack Generative Pulse Report (December 2025) | Exposure Ninja AI Search Conversion Rate Analysis (March 2026) | 6sense 2025 Buyer Experience Report | Edelman-LinkedIn B2B Thought Leadership Impact Report (2025)