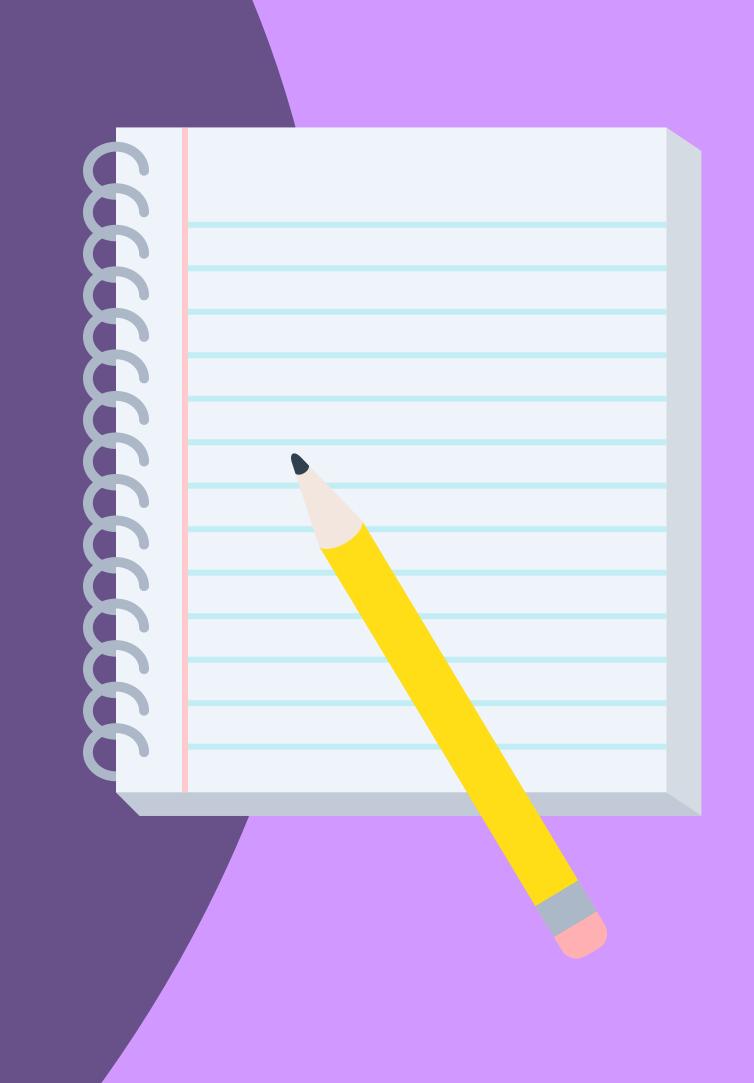
A STUDY BY

MUCK RACK

The State Of Creator Journalism 2025



Executive Summary

- Creator journalism is a mature force: Half of creator journalists have been self-publishing for more than five years, and one-third of all journalists now publish independently.
- Autonomy drives the movement: 57% of creators say creative freedom is their top motivation, far outweighing financial goals, showing independence is about control, not clicks.
- Social-first journalism is the norm: Creator journalists are more than 60% likelier than traditional journalists to view social media as essential to their reporting process.
- **PR fuels creator content: 82%** of creators say at least some of their stories begin with PR pitches, yet **72%** report most pitches are irrelevant.
- Creators are open, if you pitch right: 32% see PR pros as essential partners, 29% regularly respond to pitches, yet 72% report most pitches are irrelevant.

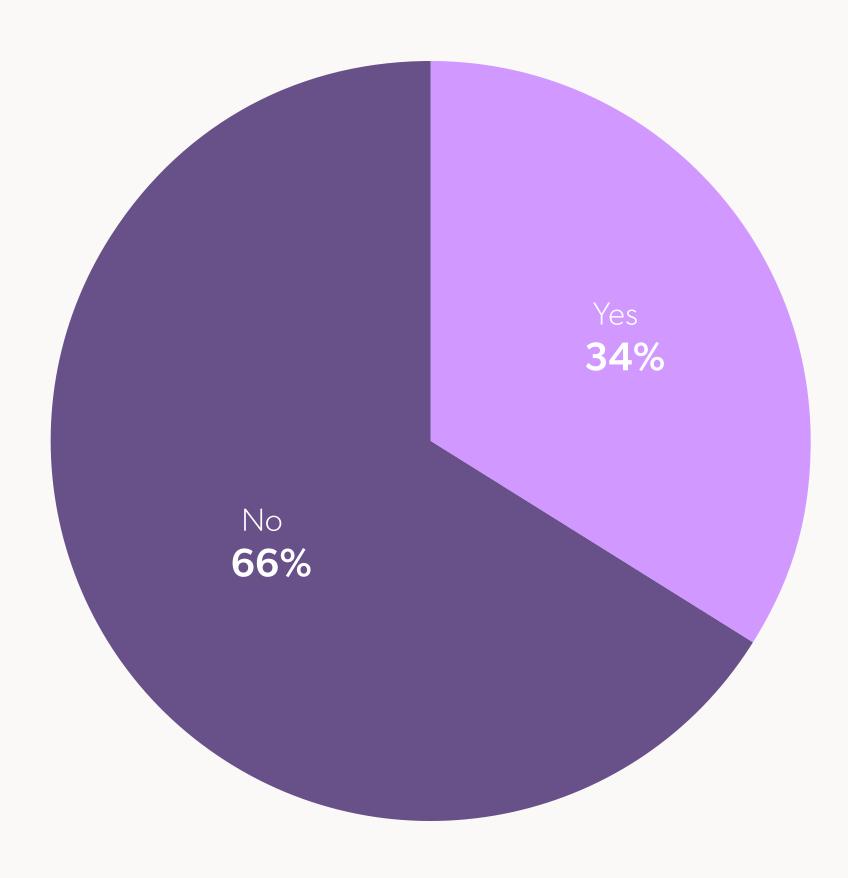
How creator journalists work

More than one-third of journalists self-publish their work

A significant portion of journalists, **34%**, now publish their work independently, and outside of a traditional newsroom.

This means the creator journalists are a large part of the media ecosystem.

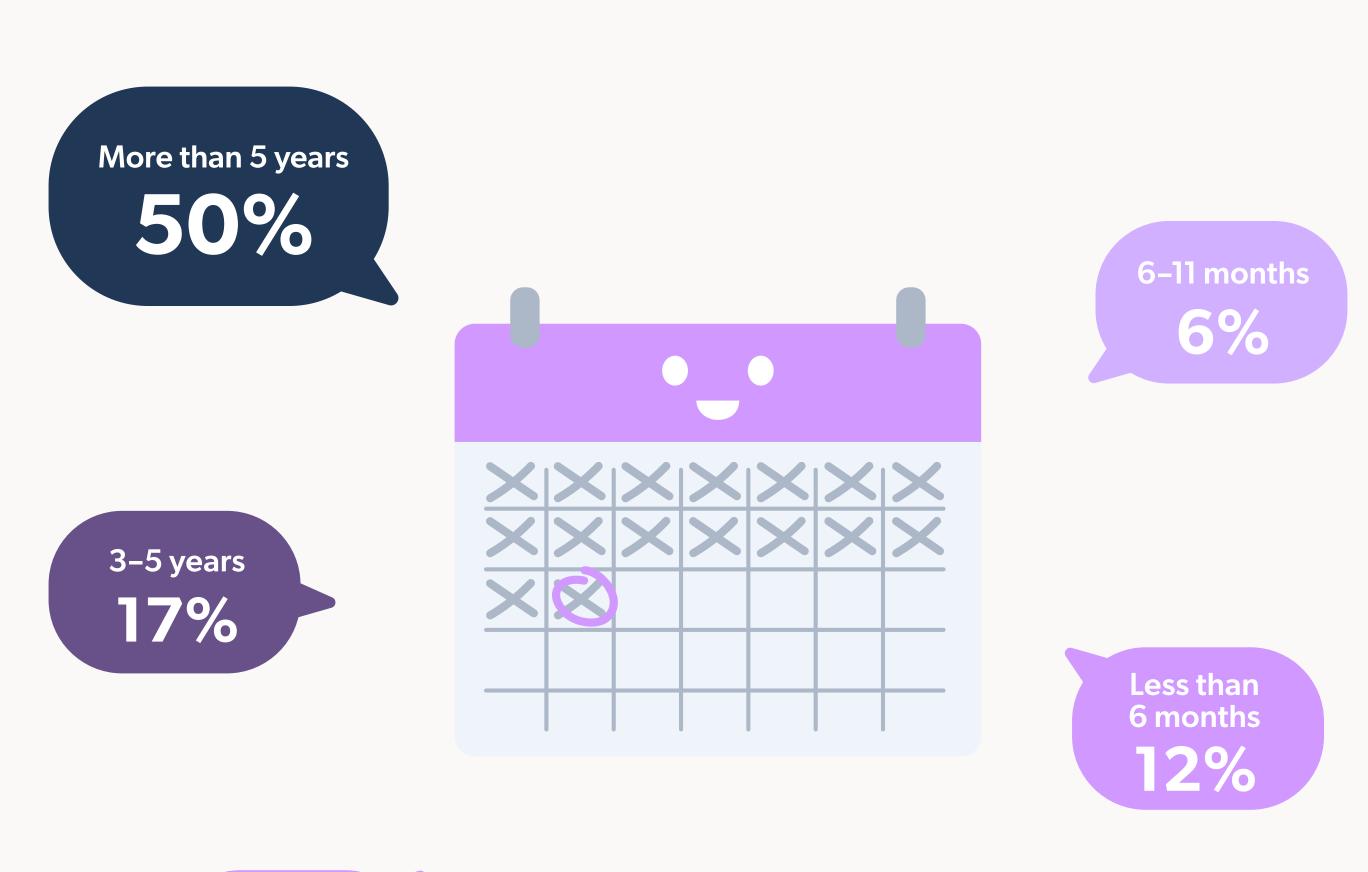
Do you independently publish news, commentary, or other content under your own name or brand, outside of a traditional media organization?



Most creator journalists have been self publishing for 5+ years

Despite recent trend reports about the rise of creator journalists, self-publishing isn't a new trend. In fact, about half of creator journalists have been doing it for more than **five years.**

How long have you been independently publishing your own journalism or commentary?

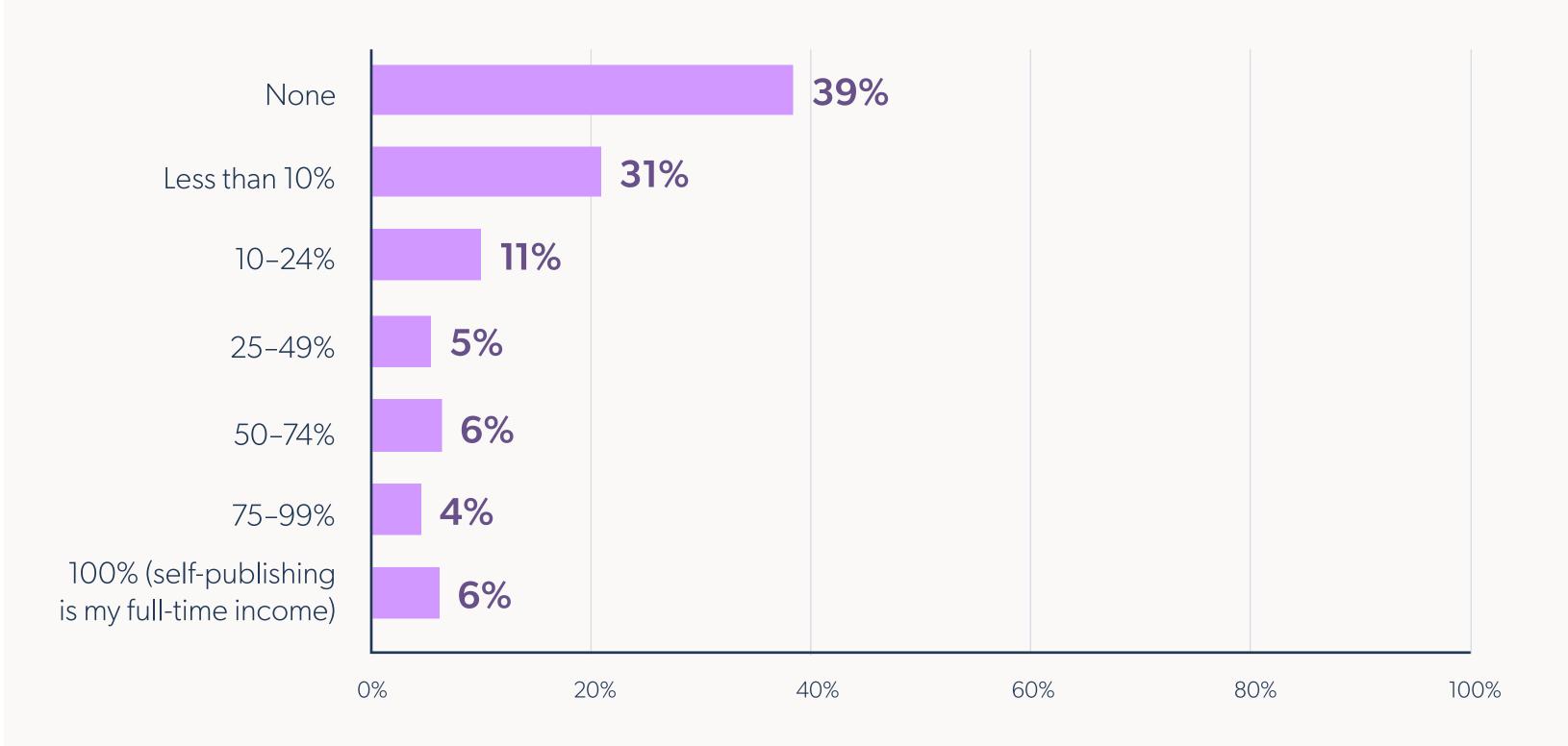




63% of creator journalists make a portion of their income from their solo work

While **39%** say they make no income from their self-publishing, more than **60%** make some money from their endeavors.

What percentage of your total annual income comes from your self-publishing work?



Creative or editorial freedom are primary motivations for creators

Some others say they self-publish for career reasons, or to fill in gaps in media coverage.

In the "other" category, some said they are connecting with a niche audience, or do it as an additional outlet for work that's not a good fit for their main job.

How would you describe your primary motivation for self-publishing?



Creative or editorial freedom



Professional branding or career development



Filling a perceived gap in media coverage



Financial opportunity



Audience engagement and community



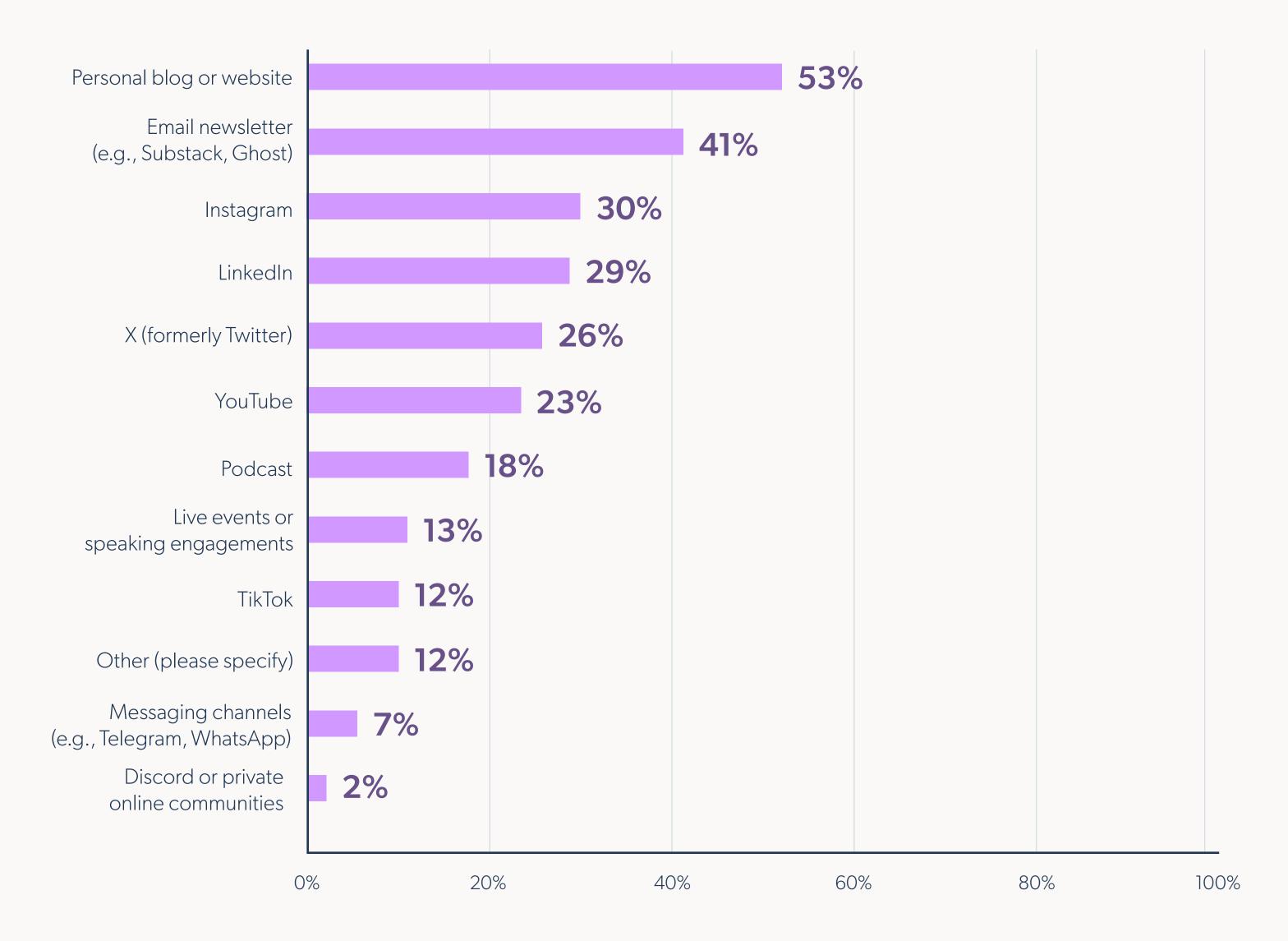
Other (please specify)

Creators publish primarily on personal websites

On average, creators use 2.5 different formats. A personal website or blog is the most commonly used medium, followed by email newsletters and a number of different social networks.

Only about **one in five** publish a podcast, and messaging platforms and online communities like Telegram or Discord are the least popular.

In which of the following formats do you self-publish? (Select all that apply)



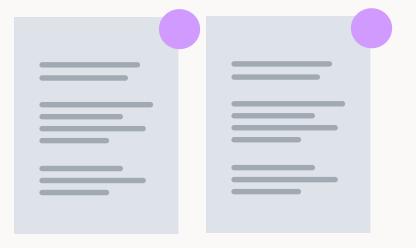
75% of creators are covering similar topics to their main job

While **45%** say the topics they cover and the approach to them are similar to their primary job, just under **one-third** say they cover the same topic but in different ways.

About **one-in-five** say the topics they cover are completely different.

The "other" category is mostly people for whom self-publishing is their main job.

How similar is the focus of your self-publishing work compared to your main job?



It's very similar—the topics and approach overlap

45%



It's completely different
—I cover unrelated topics

19%



It's somewhat different— I explore other subjects or formats

30%



Other (please specify)

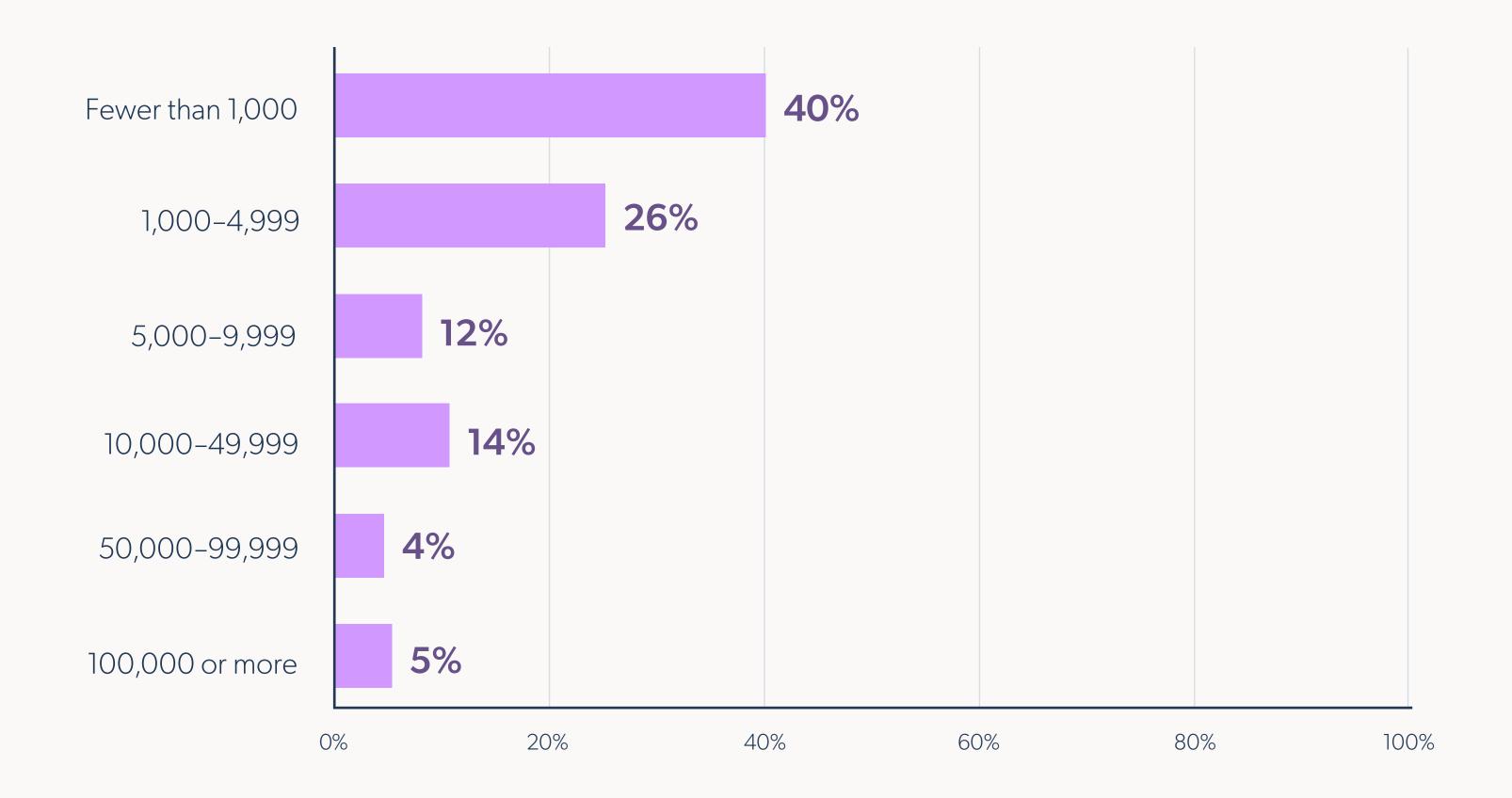
6%

Subscriber bases vary significantly for creators, but most are small

78% of creators say their self publishing reaches less than 10,000 subscribers or followers, putting them in the "nano influencer" category.

Just under **one quarter** have more than 10,000 followers.

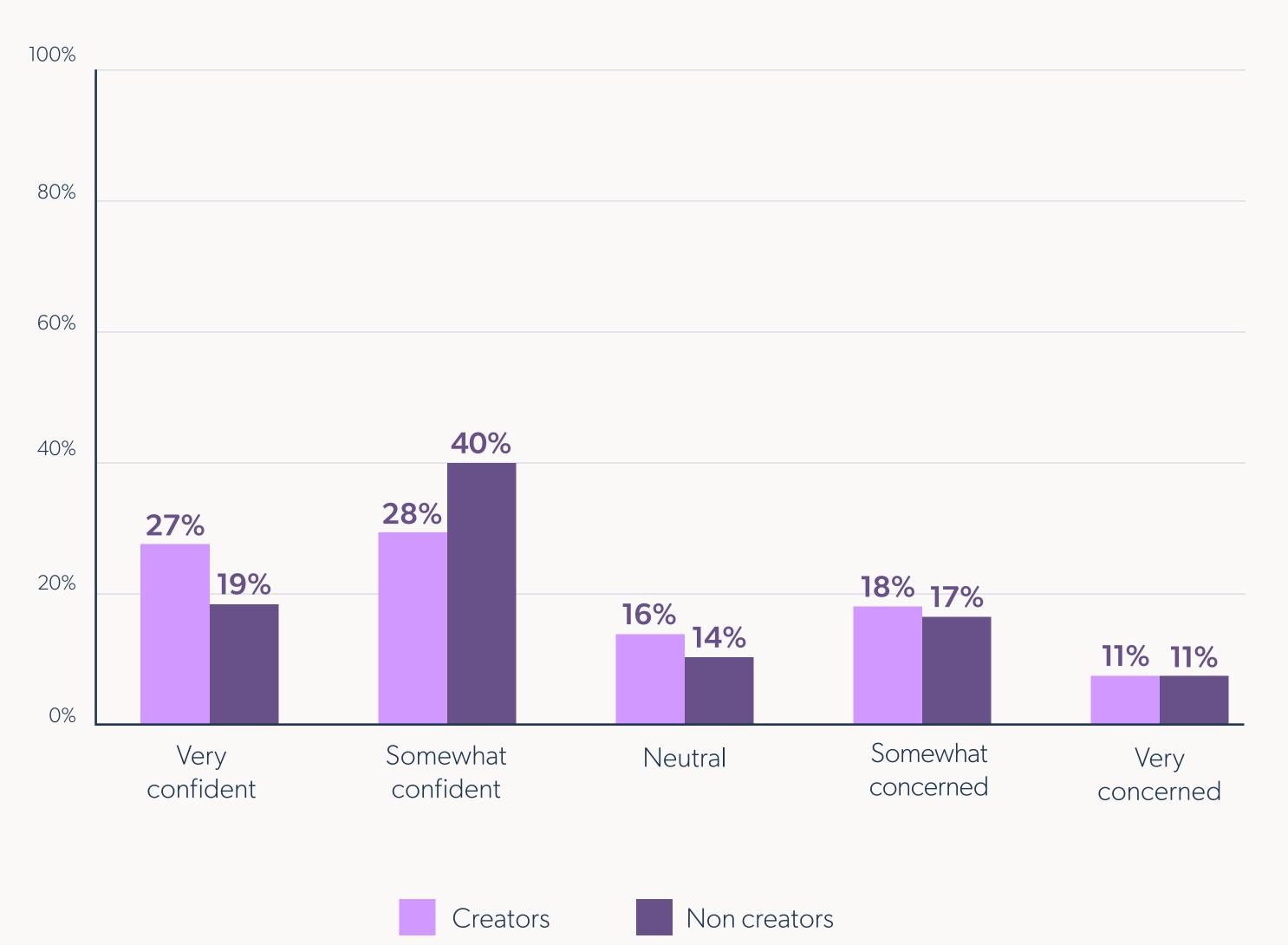
Approximately how many followers or subscribers do you have across your self-publishing channels?



Creators are more confident in the long term stability of their employment

27% of creator journalists said they are very confident in the long-term stability of their organization compared to just 19% for those who don't self-publish.

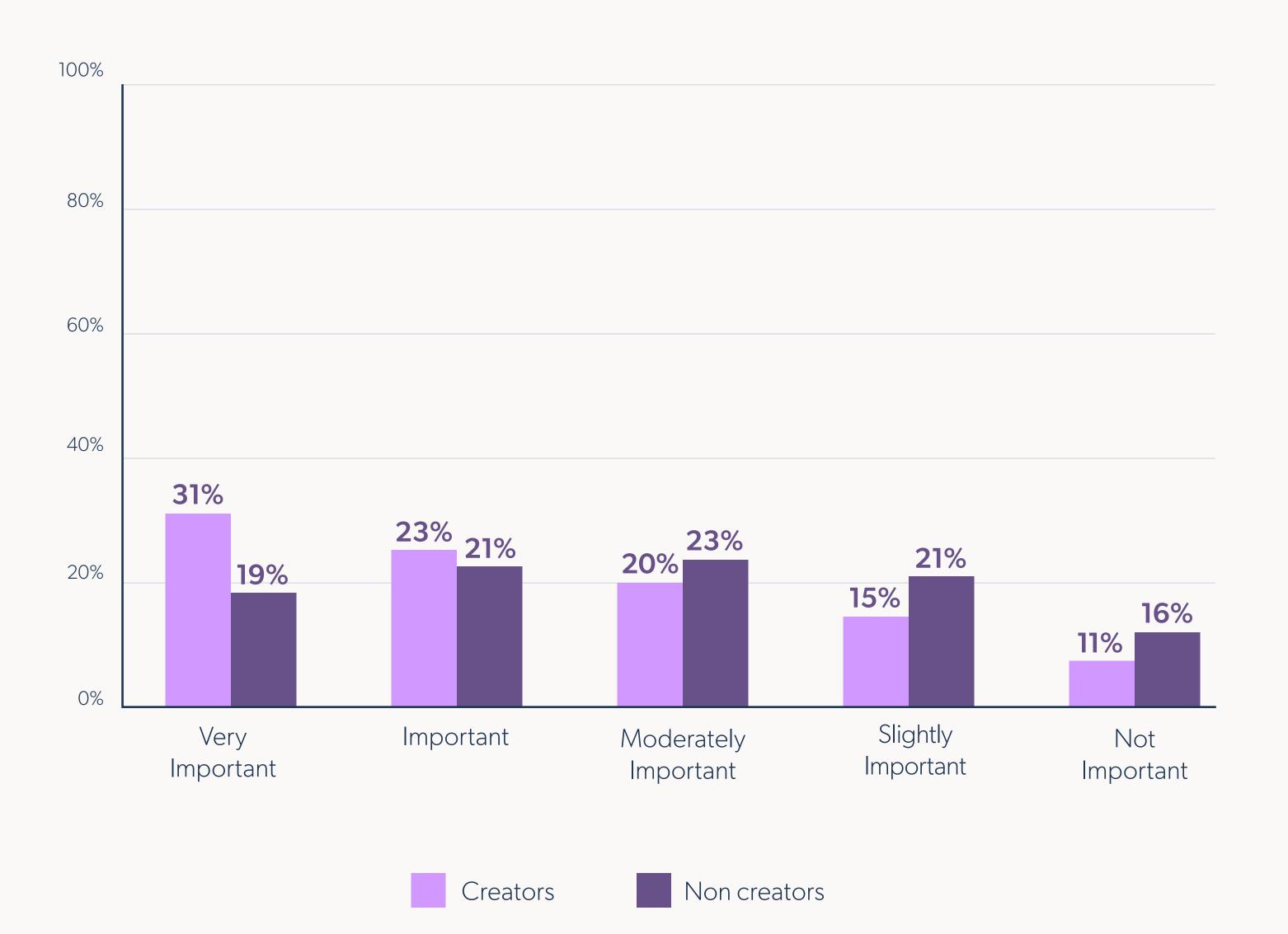
How confident are you in the long-term stability of the organization you work for?



Social media is incredibly important to producing creators' work

Compared to those who don't self-publish, creator journalists are much more likely to say social media is essential to doing their work. 31% of creators say social media is very important compared to 19% of those who do not self-publish.

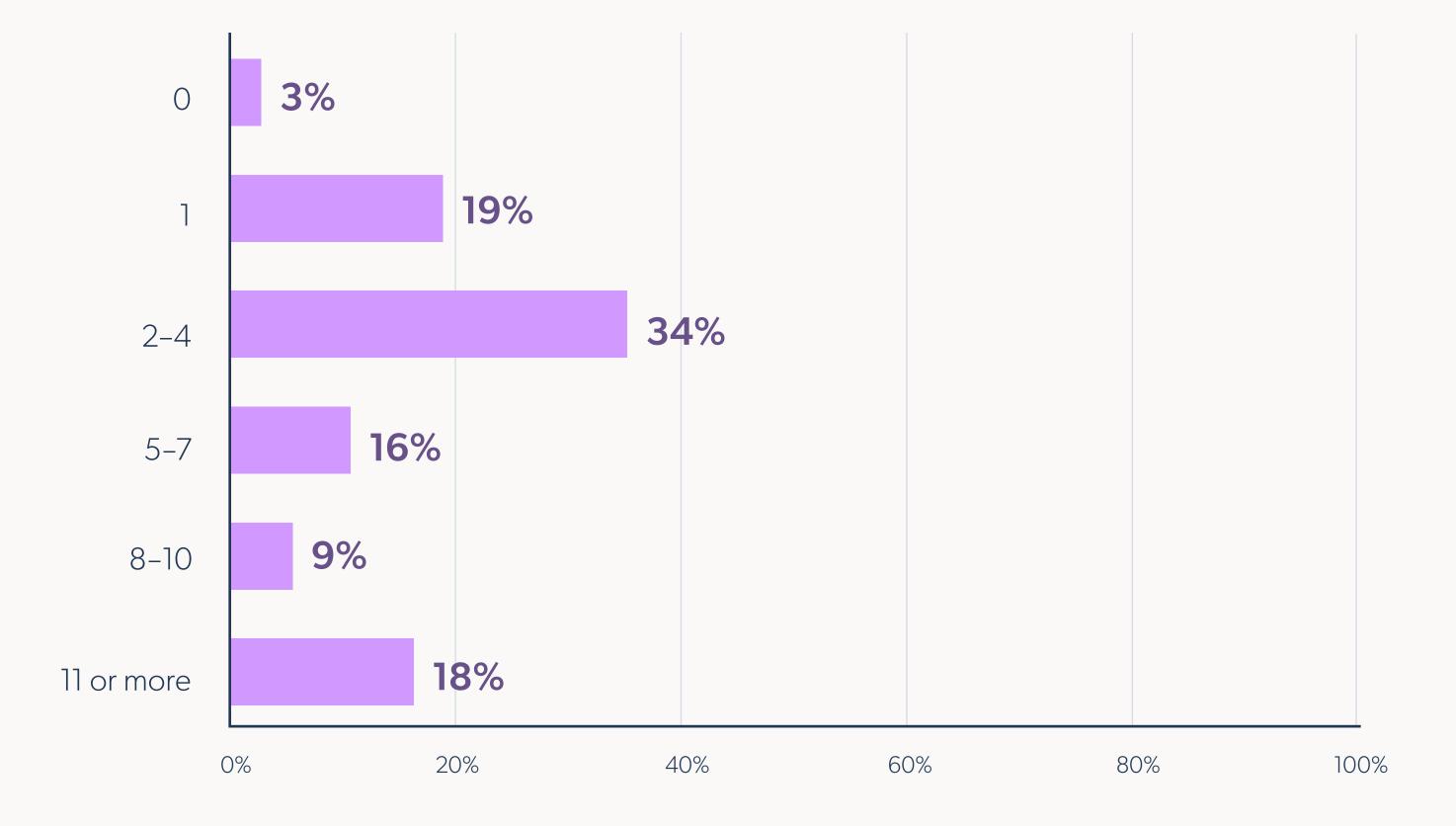
How important is social media to producing your work?



Publishing frequency varies, but most publish 2-4 stories per week

About **43**% publish five or more stories per week, and nearby **one-in-five** put out 11 or more. But **53**% put out four or fewer.

About how many stories do you publish in an average week?

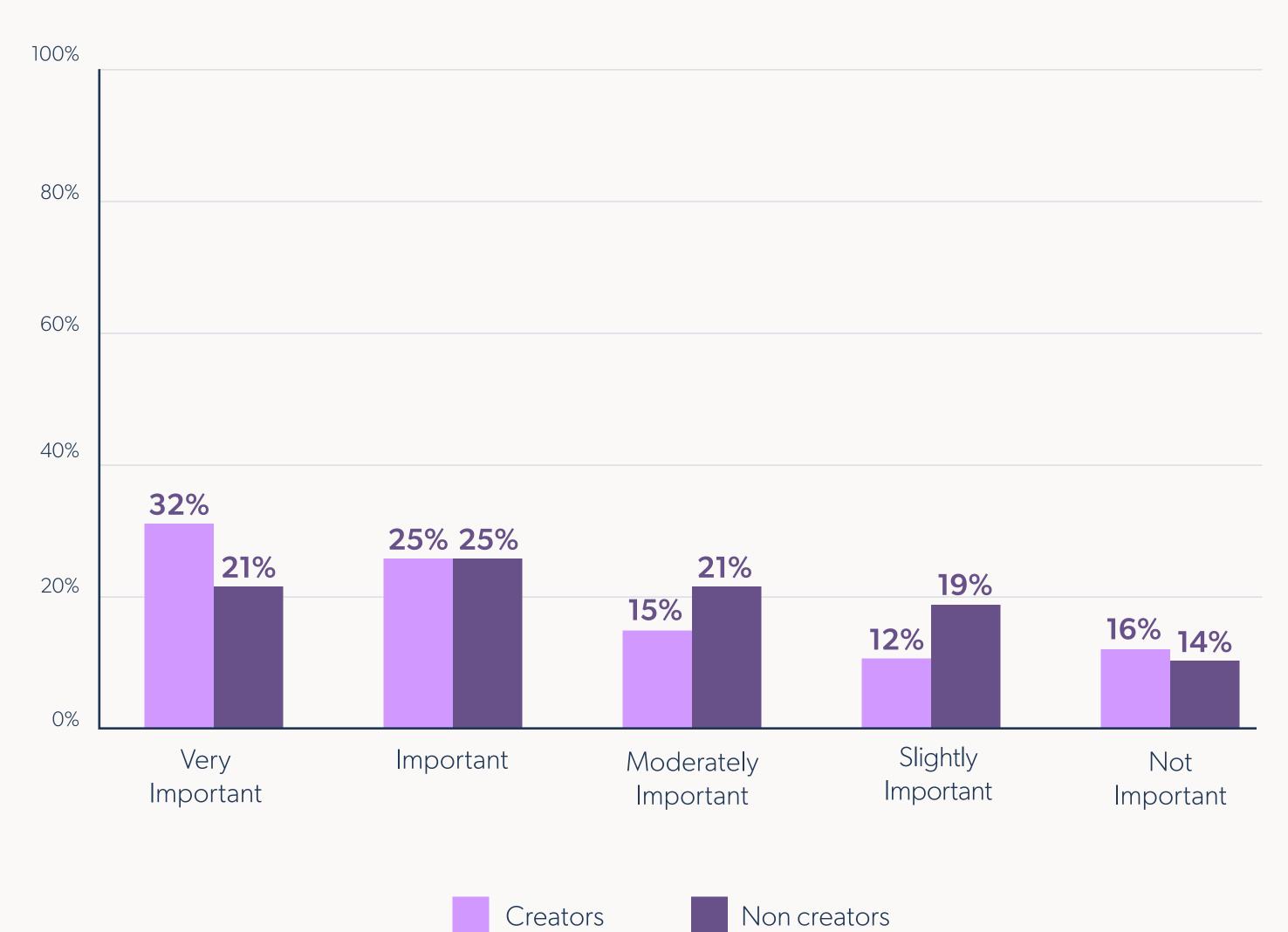


Media Relations

Creator journalists are more likely to see PR pros as essential to their work

32% of creators say their relationships with PR pros are important to being successful at work compared to **21%** of those who don't self-publish.

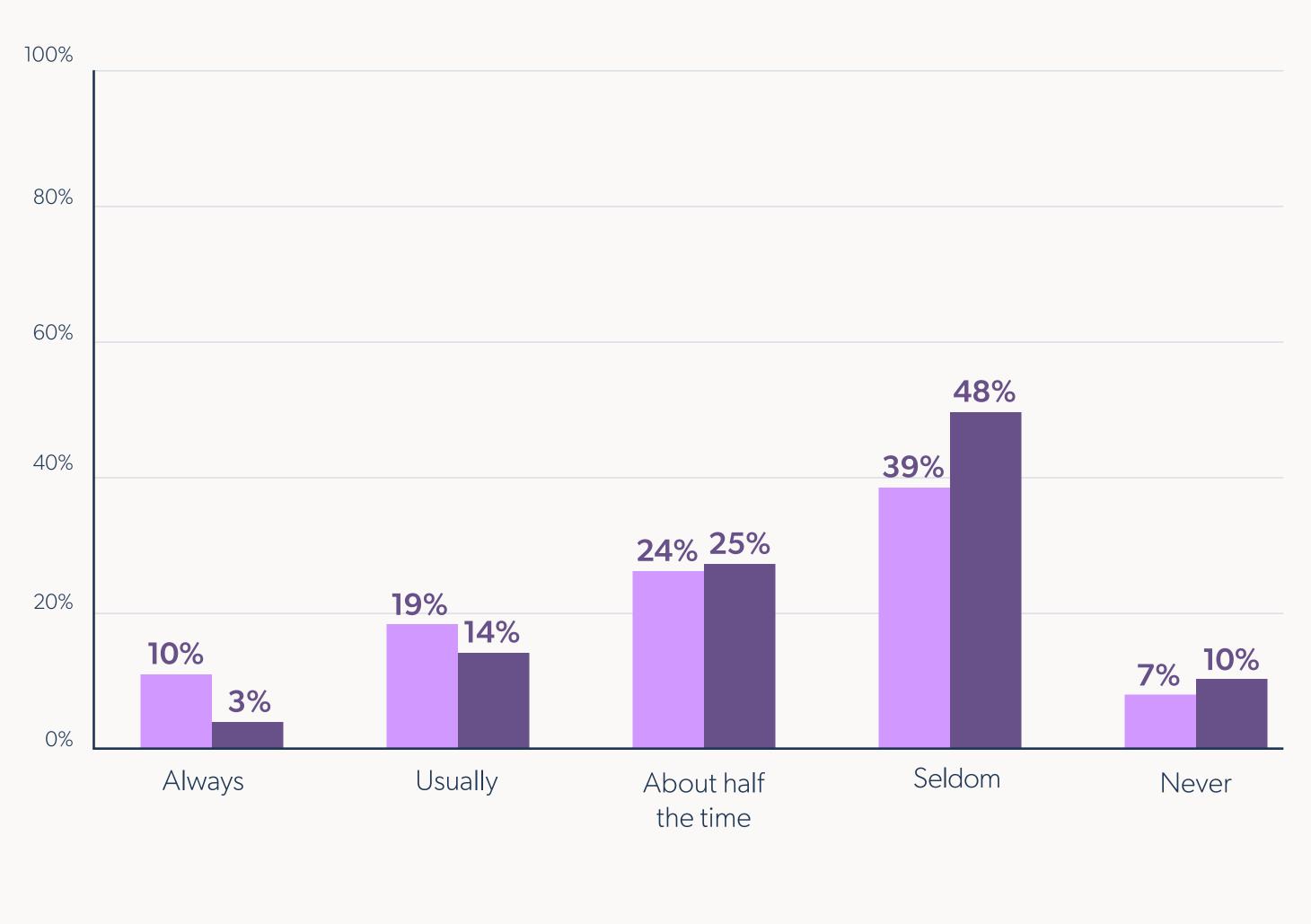
How important are your relationships with public relations professionals to being successful at your job?



Creators are more likely to respond to PR pros

Due to their views on the importance of PR pros to being successful at their jobs, creator journalists also respond to PR pros at higher rates. **29%** of creators say they usually or always respond to PR pros compared to **17%** for traditional journalists.

How often do you respond to PR pros when they pitch you stories?



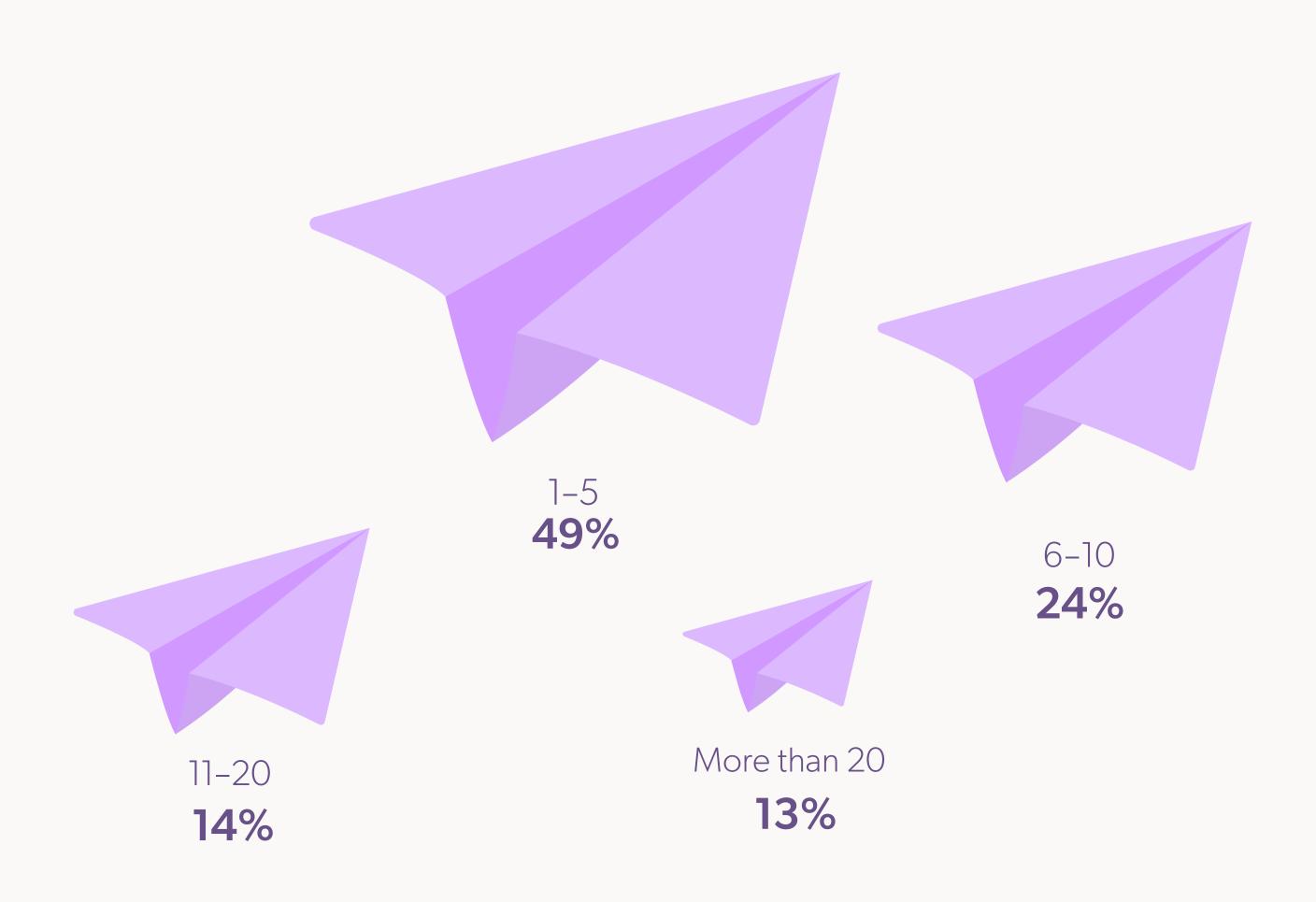




Creators still receive a lot of PR pitches

As far as the volume of pitches received, creators journalists are similar to traditional journalists. **About half** say they receive 1–5 pitches in a normal work day, while **more than** a **quarter** get more than 10.

How many PR pitches did you receive during your last normal work day?



PR pitches are rarely relevant to their coverage area

Creator journalists are also similar to their counterparts in that the pitches they receive are largely not relevant to what they cover.

72% say half or fewer of the pitches are a good fit.

How often do you receive PR pitches relevant to what you cover?



Always **6%**



Usually 22%



About half the time 30%



Seldom 35%



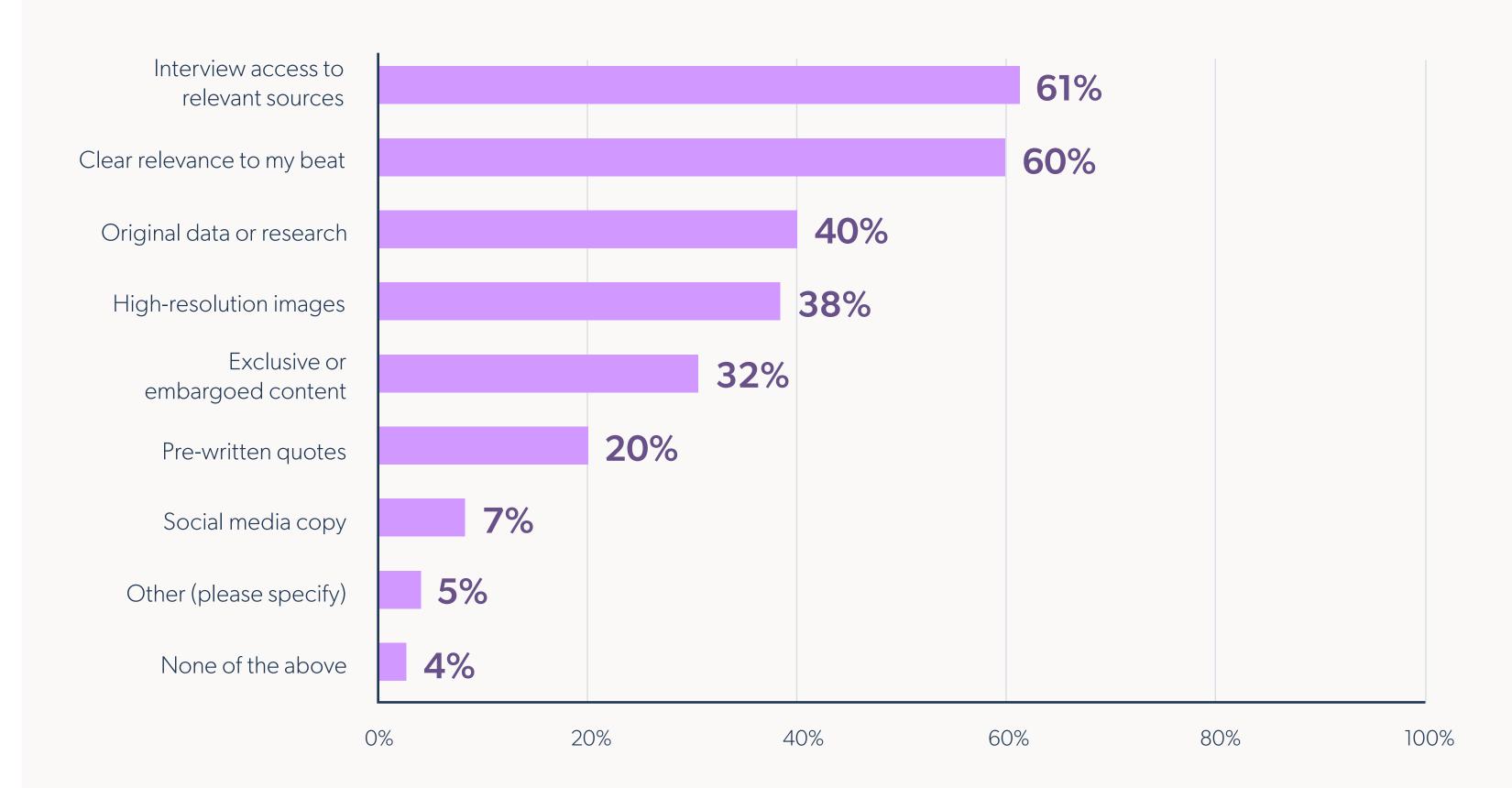
Never 7%

Pitches should include interview access and relevance to their beat

Creator journalists want to see a pitch that includes interview access and a clear relevance to their beat.

Original data, good images and exclusives are also nice-to-haves for many.

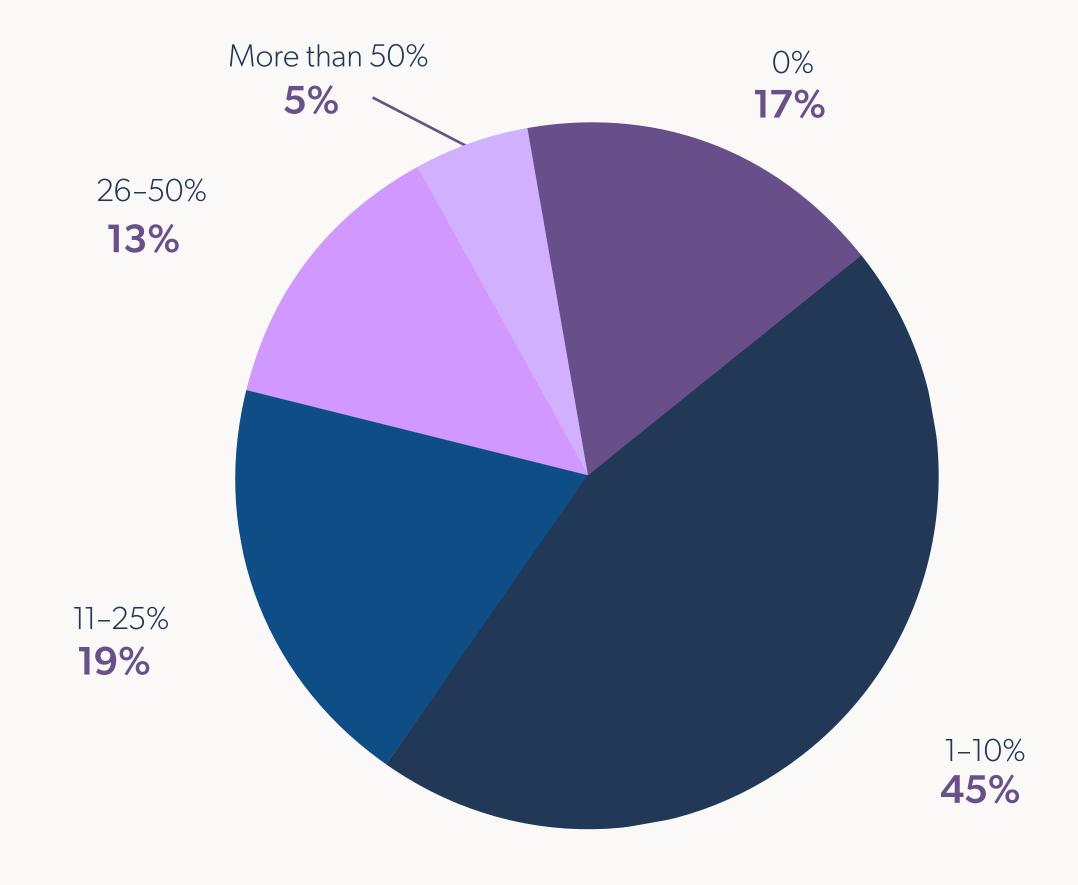
Which of the following should a PR pro ideally offer along with their story pitch?



82% of creators say a portion of their stories begin with a PR pitch

Most commonly, **45%** say about **1–10%** of their stories start from PR pitches. **18%** say a quarter of their output or more begin as PR pitches.

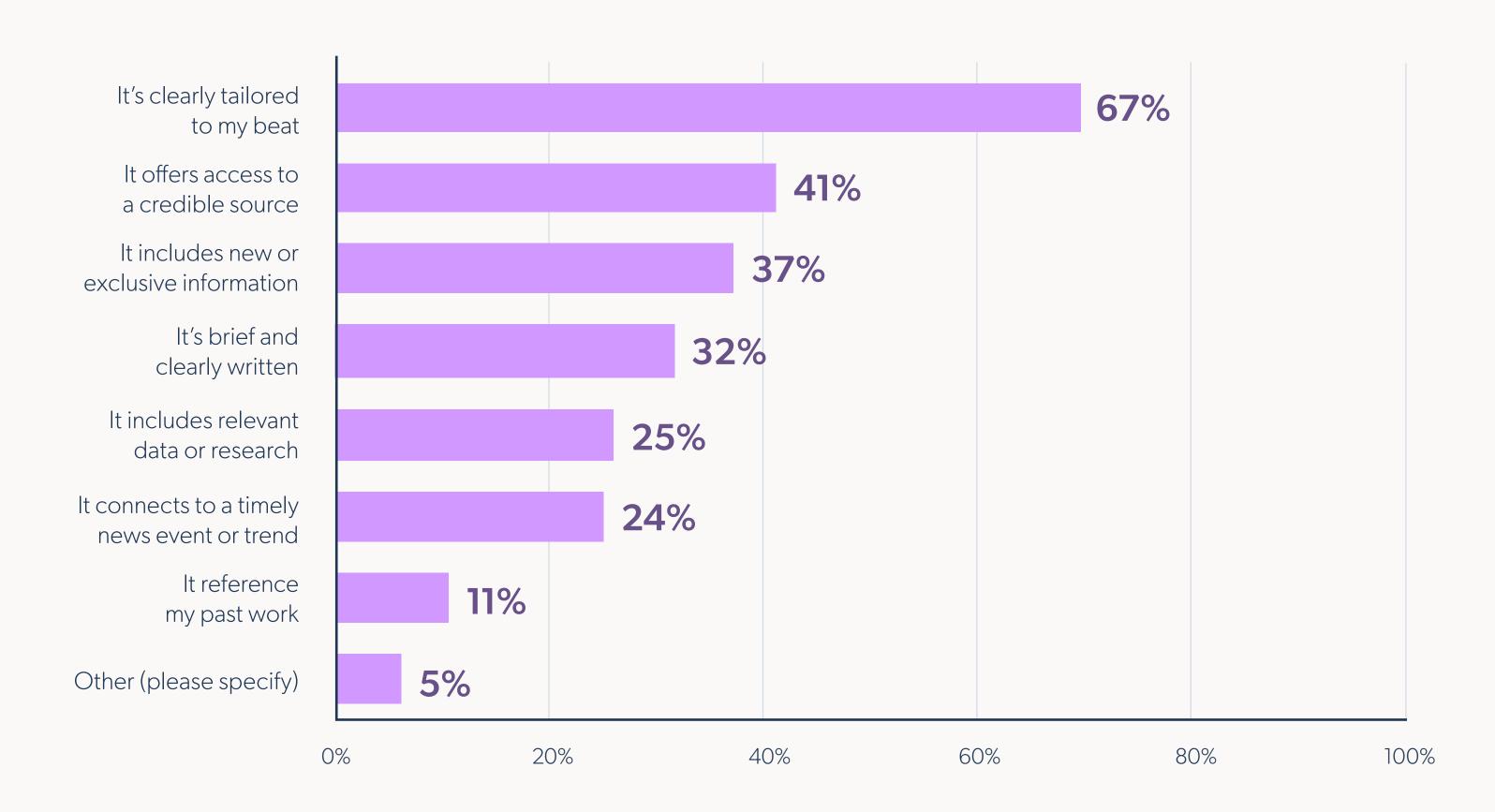
About what percentage of your published stories started with a PR pitch?



Relevance to their beat is an essential signal in a PR pitch

Similar to journalists who do not self-publish, creator journalists think a pitch is worth their time if it is clearly tailored to the beat they cover.

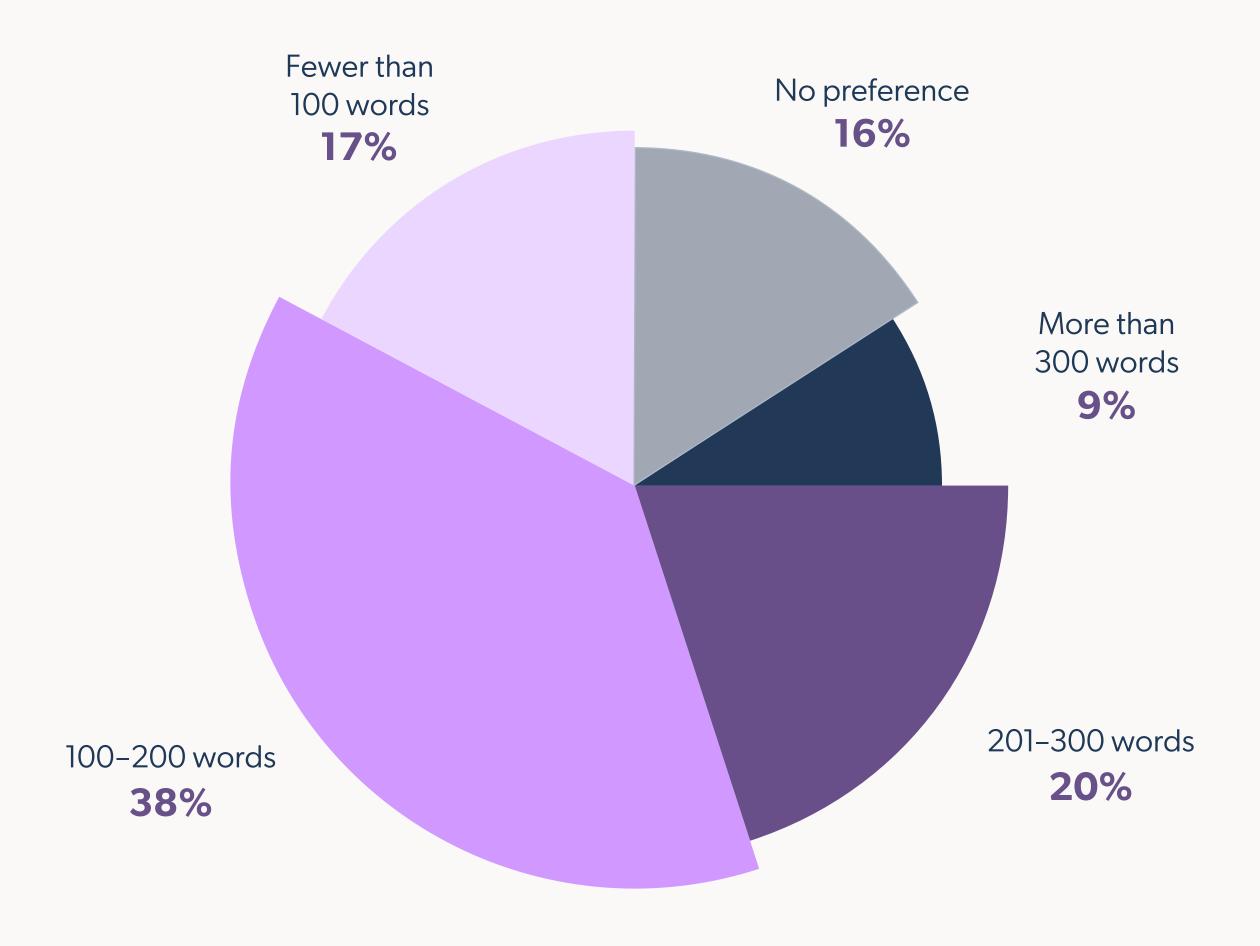
Which of the following signals that a PR pitch is worth your time? (Select all that apply)



55% of creator journalists want pitches fewer than 200 words

While some, 16%, have no real preference on pitch length, less than one-third want more than 200 words.

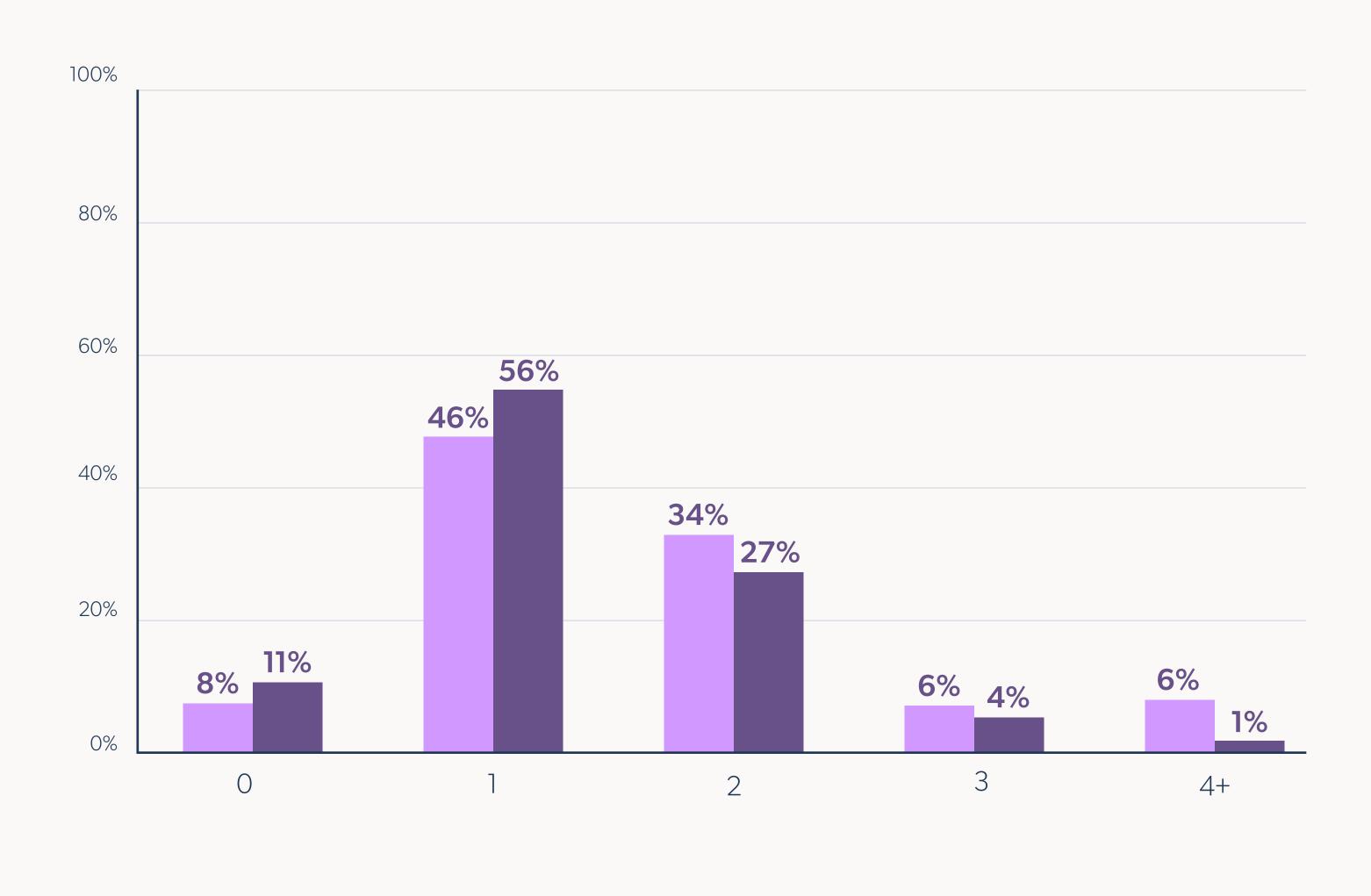
What is your ideal pitch length?



Creators have a higher tolerance for follow-ups

46% say they prefer a single follow-up email, but a higher proportion of creators will tolerate 2 or more.

How many follow up emails are acceptable?





82% think the follow-up should come within the first week

A little less than **one-third** say it's OK to reach out within two days, while the majority say 3–7.

After an initial pitch, when is it acceptable to send a follow-up?









Methodology

This survey aims to understand the current state of self-publishing, creators journalists along with their motivations and challenges. The self-administered online survey collected 1,890 responses. After data cleaning, there remained 1,515 journalists. Of those, 522 self-identified as creator journalists.

Muck Rack distributed the survey with the help of research partners including the Foreign Press Association, Society of Professional Journalists and others.

The survey was distributed via email to journalists in Muck Rack's database from April 4 to April 30, 2025. Most responses came from U.S.-based journalists, with additional representation from the United Kingdom, Canada and India.

Low-quality responses were removed from the sample. This includes duplicates, spam, low-effort responses and straight-line answers. The estimated margin of error is $\pm 4.3\%$. Unless otherwise noted, results should not be compared with previous years due to changes in question wording. Totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding errors.

MUCK RACK

Thank you!

Muck Rack is the leading provider of award-winning PR software powered by intuitive technology and the most accurate, comprehensive data provided by journalists themselves. The platform combines global monitoring and reporting with its world class media data for seamless team collaboration, pitching and measurement. Purpose-built for communications and public relations, Muck Rack helps nearly 6,000 companies worldwide analyze and report on the impact of their media relations. Thousands of journalists use Muck Rack's free tools to showcase their portfolios, analyze news about any topic and measure the impact of their stories.

Muck Rack for journalists

Muck Rack for PR pros