

Essentials of working with media

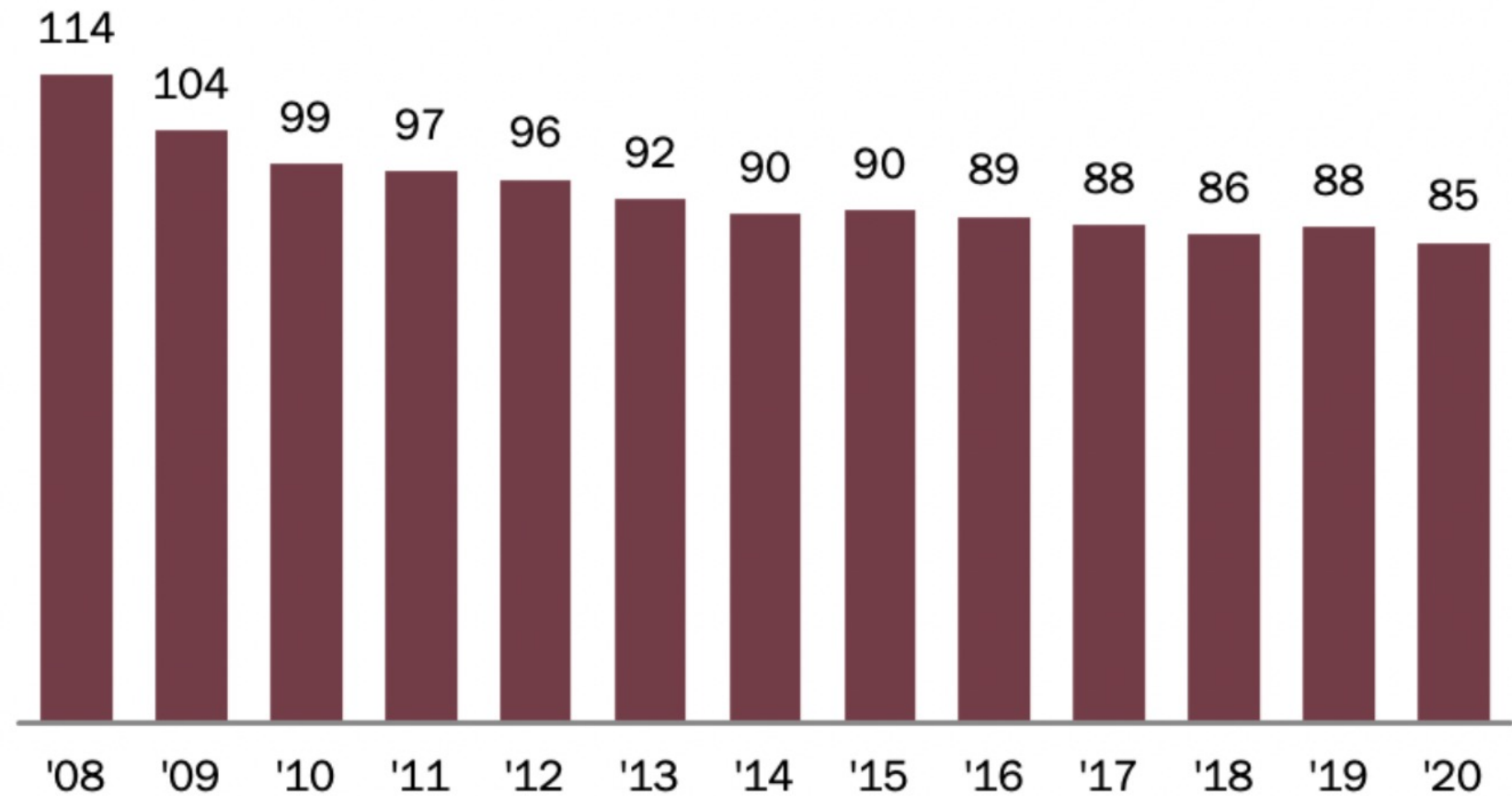
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U.S. Newsroom Employment

Newsroom employment in the United States declined 26% between 2008 and 2020

Number of U.S. newsroom employees in news industries, in thousands



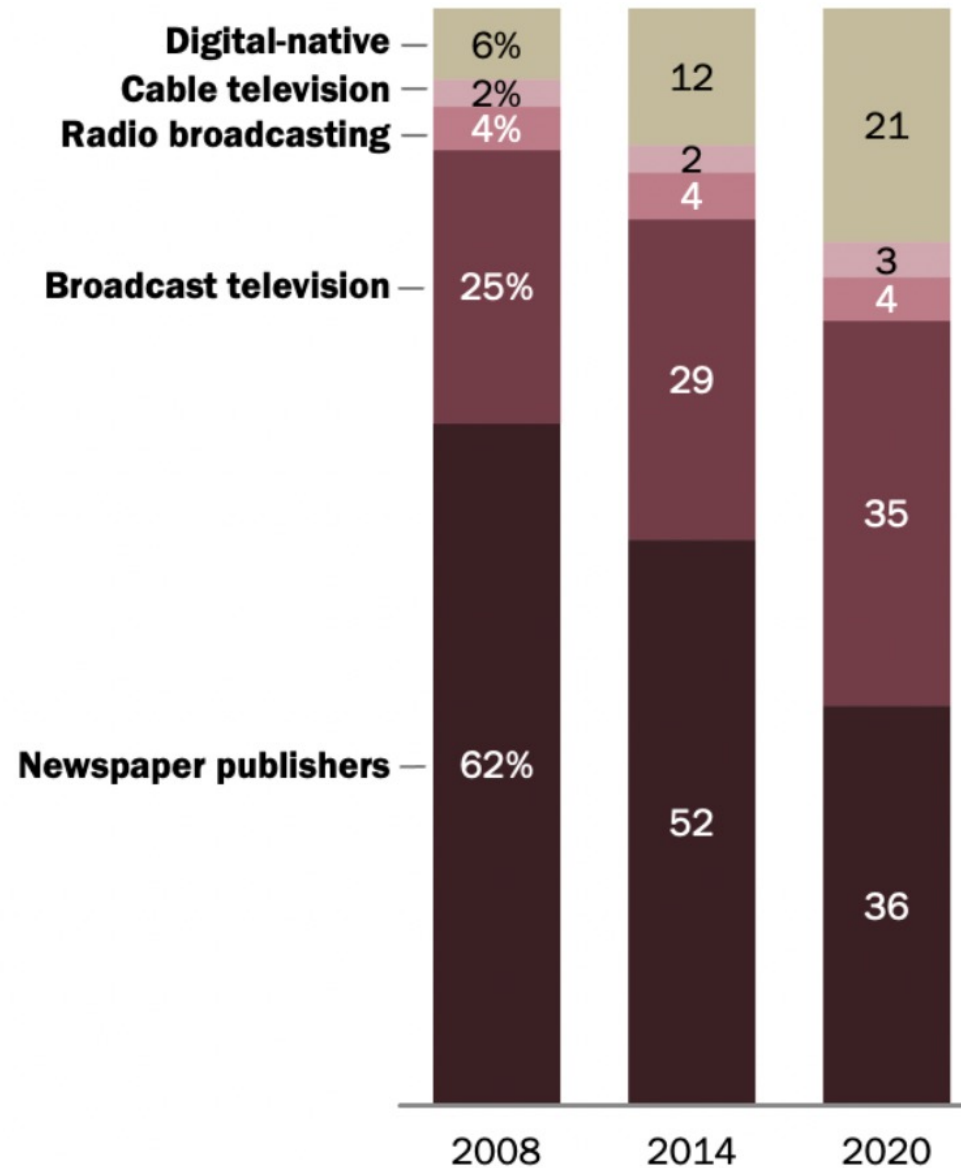
Data & figure from Pew
Research Center

Newsroom Employees & News Industry

Data & figure from Pew
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Newspapers now account for a smaller share of total newsroom employment

% of U.S. newsroom employees in news industries



A journalist's needs depend on the audience

National



The New York Times



Local



Specialty





Media platforms

Journalists and Scientists

More alike than you think

- Inherently curious
- Seek truth & honor accuracy
- Follow the evidence where it leads
- Measured by what they publish
- Prestige in being first



But professional practicalities differ.

- Academic timescales *vs.* rapid deadlines
- Completeness *vs.* simplicity
- Preparedness *vs.* unscripted moments





A reporter reaches out

Considering a request

Respond promptly

Considering a request

Respond promptly

Questions to ask

- What is your story about?
- What outlet is your story for?
- What is your deadline?
- Phone, email, or video? Recorded or live?

Considering a request

Respond promptly

Questions to ask

What are *your* priority audiences?

Considering a request

Respond promptly

Questions to ask

What are *your* priority audiences?

Respond promptly (again)

Considering a request

Respond promptly

Questions to ask

What are *your* priority audiences?

Respond promptly (again)

Refer a colleague



You've said yes...now what?

Before the interview: on the record

Agreements about attribution should be decided before the interview, not during – and especially not after.

Common speaking terms:

On the record (this is the default)

On background

Off the record



During the Interview: Pivot

Acknowledge the question

Use a transition statement

Make your desired point

This process isn't natural.

Some helpful phrases

- I understand what you are asking, but I think what's more important is...
- Some may say that, but what my research shows is...
- That's one perspective, but I like to look at the bigger picture...
- I think it would be more accurate to describe it this way....
- I don't want to speculate. What I think matters most in this situation is ...
- Perhaps, but the most important point I want to make is....

When might pivots be useful?



- Hypotheticals
- False premise
- False dilemma
- Off the wall
- Soft pivot

Before you end the interview



After the interview: what comes next?



- You cannot see the story before publication
- You can ask for a fact check

After the interview: what if there's a mistake?

CORRECTION





How can you be found?

Have a webpage

- Make it easily understood by non-scientists.
- Use searchable keywords.
- Describe how your research is societally relevant.
- Be open about your interest in science communication.



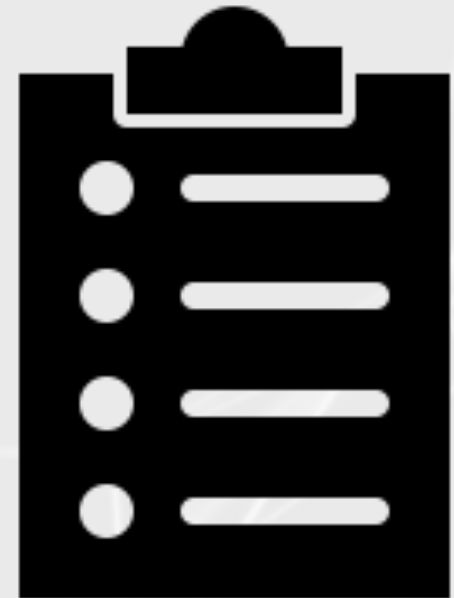
Meet your Public Information Officer (PIO)

- Let them know you're interested in working with media.
- Alert them when you have an important study or report coming out.
- If your institution puts out a press release about your work, do your best to be available for interviews.



Add your name to publicly available expert lists and matching services

- University experts (through media relations office)
- Discipline-specific or demographic-specific lists
- Sign up with SciLine!



Write about your expertise for the public

- Op-eds
- Blogs or university publications
- The Conversation



If you choose to be on social media

- Be thoughtful about what you say to the public.
- Assume every post or tweet is on the record.
- Follow reporters whose work you respect and engage in dialogue.



Maintain good relationships

- Be available, responsive, and prepared.
- Reach out to reporters whose stories you like.



Thank you!

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