

Media usage research focuses on the information sources business professionals use in their work. It seeks to understand what sources are used most, as well as how these sources are used in different circumstances.

The Media Usage study was launched by Readex in 2022 and is an exhaustive survey in that typically 16-18 different information sources are examined, including print, digital and in-person. With several studies completed, this paper will summarize some of the key findings from recent surveys across several different industries. Results are aggregated and include just over 2,000 total survey respondents. .

Broadly speaking, the objectives of the study include:

- Identify sources used most for information professionals need to do their job, including print, digital and in person sources.
- Illustrate that people seeking business information use multiple channels, supporting the notion of an integrated media buy.
- Understand how the audience uses available media sources when engaging in the purchase journey for products and services.
- For brands with a print product, show that print remains a viable source.

The customary Media Usage study includes 12-15 distinct questions. This paper presents the results to four that are arguably at the heart of the usage question.

The first subject we are summarizing is frequency of use. This is one of the several “core” questions that are always included in a study. The question is presented as follows: “How often do you read, view, visit, attend or use the following types of information sources?” Again, the typical survey lists 16 to 18 different sources from which survey participants may choose, and they have the option to indicate how often a channel is used: daily, weekly, monthly. When we look at our aggregated results based on monthly usage, these are the top six sources:

Sources	Percent Using Monthly
Industry-related websites	76%
Industry-related print magazines	73%
Company websites	72%
Industry-related direct email	67%
Industry-related e-newsletters	66%
Manufacturer or supplier publications	66%

Across the entire list of sources, the overall range of monthly usage is 76% to 21%. Because of the lengthy list, we are limiting the information we report in this paper to the top six.

From our view, it is clear that professionals use a number of sources to gain the information they need for their jobs and work. They don't just use one source over and over, they use several. Further, this widespread usage extends to all age categories, young and old. While it's true that younger individuals are using a host of digital sources, they have not walked away from print or other more traditional sources.

There is a significant amount of interest in a question that covers the purchase journey. The purpose is to get a feeling for the sources individual use at various points in the journey including starting to think about a purchase, research options, narrowing down of choices and making the final decision.

When we look at the results, a very natural progression seems to emerge. In the chart you can see how magazines, including print, are the most-used source when an individual enters the journey, using publications to spot products and services that may fit the pending need. As the purchase consideration becomes more serious and the individual begins researching options, other information sources come into play, including those that provide more detail and knowledge. When the set of prospective purchase options become smaller, we see company websites, where one can gather very specific information about a product or service, become very widely used. Finally, at the point when a decision is to be made, company websites are widely used. However, in businesses in which a dealer or retailer is part of the mix, a place where one can go to get personal advice and counsel, these relationships are very important and are part of the final decision process.

Top six sources at each point along the purchase journey	Start thinking about purchase	Research options	Narrow down choices	Make final decision
Industry-related magazines, print	42%	33%	19%	8%
Industry-related magazines, digital	33%	34%	21%	9%
Industry-related websites	25%	39%	40%	20%
Company websites	23%	33%	44%	31%
Manufacturer publications	23%	29%	37%	20%
Industry dealers/retailers	21%	28%	35%	29%

Another important question in media usage research is related to how individuals first learn about new products and services. Obviously, this has a bearing on how marketers consider “getting the word out” on new offerings they might have for their target markets. Those participating in the survey were asked to report their top two sources. The table details the top six, with those not shown falling below the 14% level.

Top six sources through which respondents report first learning about new products and services	
Industry-related magazines, print	43%
Industry-related magazines, digital	24%
Industry related websites	21%
Company websites	16%
Industry dealers/retailers	14%
Shows/conferences/seminars	14%

Finally, our last table changes directions a bit and examines the types of information survey respondents find most helpful in doing their job or running the business. This is irrespective of the source, e.g. print magazine, digital magazine, e-newsletter and so on. Out of 14 different choices, this shows the top three and bottom three.

Top three and bottom three “types of information found most helpful”	
Industry news	68%
New products and services	68%
Inspiration/creative ideas	56%
Operations advice	26%
People news	20%
HR advice	12%

If you have any questions about this study and results, please let us know. We are happy to talk with you and share additional information. Contact Susan Griffith at; sgriffith@readexresearch.com 612.986.0109.