The State of the News Product Community 2020

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In Partnership with **News Product Alliance**

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Executive Summary

Digital technologies have had a vast influence on the ways we communicate, share, live and work. They also introduce news ways to produce and disseminate news, and new roles in news organizations have emerged that support a range of digital features, including content management, audience engagement, interactivity, multimedia, analytics and data visualization. Media companies, once focused on a single product (a newspaper or television broadcast) now work on multiple external and internal products – websites, content management systems, mobile apps, chatbots, interactive story presentations, podcasts, newsletters, experiments with virtual and augmented reality and more. Along with the requirements of these products come new sets of skills and competencies to coordinate, develop, manage and support them. These product managers and product-adjacent functions are the focus of this report.

Researchers are just beginning to study product management as it relates to journalism. Royal (2017) first studied this function as it began to emerge, interviewing 14 people about the role of product in media in 2016. In 2020, a forum of scholars explored a breadth of issues associated with product management in journalism and academia (Royal, et al., 2020). Other studies have looked at best practices for product professionals in media (Sonderman, 2016), new roles for journalists in data, analytics and social media (Kosterich & Weber, 2019) and managing technology resources in news organizations (Kosterich, 2020). In November 2020, the Northwestern University Knight Lab launched a series of articles on product thinking in journalism (Gallo, 2020).

The product function in media has progressed over the past few years with training programs, conferences and organizations. The University of Texas Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas (knightcenter.utexas.edu) has offered two product-thinking courses since 2017 (Knight Center, 2017; Mioli, 2019). The Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism in conjunction with NewsCatalyst (newscatalyst.org) offers professional and executive programs in product concepts (Newmark J-School Staff, 2020). In April 2019, a small group of product leaders met in Dallas, Texas to address ways in which the profession could better support product thinking in news. This resulted in the SRCCON:Product (product.srccon.org) conference, convening 225 news product professionals in Philadelphia in February 2020. In September 2020, the News Product Alliance (NPA) (newsproduct.org) was launched to build "a community of support and practice for news product professionals and product thinkers."

All these activities point to a function that is growing, in flux and in need of further definition and identification as it relates to journalism and media companies, so this is an appropriate time to learn more about its actors. This study is the first extensive analysis of product professionals and product thinking in media organizations. To gain insight into product and related roles and the intersections at which they operate, a survey of news product professionals was launched, in conjunction with NPA. Starting September 23, 2020, product professionals were invited to join the NPA community via an email list of product-related personnel gathered through product-focused events. When a user provided their name and email address on the website, a follow-up email was sent, inviting them with a link to complete the survey. Of the 1074 who joined the community by October 9, 2020, 297 completed the entirety of the closed-ended questions of the survey, a 28% response rate. The survey included 30 closed-ended and 6 open-ended questions that inquired about backgrounds, work history and perceptions of the position of product management in the news industry.

Report Highlights:

- The survey results offer an idea of what the product community looks like demographically. The community is equally represented by gender with men making up 49% and women at 51%, although gender discrepancies exist across some position categories. Most people fell into the 25-34 (37%) and 35-44 (37%) age groups, with slightly more men than women in the 45-54 age group, which made up 16% of the survey.
- The survey indicated that the community needs diversity improvements: 70% of respondents identified as White, with Hispanic/Latinx, Asian and Black respondents each comprising less than 10%.
- More than 2/3 of respondents don't have "product" in their title, indicating a range of titles involved in the function. While 55% described their job as a product role or an editorial or revenue bridge role, the community also includes data scientists, news executives, journalists, technologists and others.
- Almost two-thirds of the respondents said their specific positions did not exist five years ago, and nearly 90% have been in their current role for less than five years. Even those who identified as journalists were likely to say their particular role didn't exist five years ago (71%). This indicates an emerging field with career development implications.
- More than half of respondents indicated that their organization had a dedicated product team. However, 13% of respondents did not provide an answer to this question and another 13% responded "I think people are doing this work without the titles or resources" or "Not sure." This indicates a general level of uncertainty about how product roles are organized.
- Descriptions of job functions represented the themes of "intersections" and working across "multiple functions." But some statements continue to uphold more traditional descriptions of these roles as "support" functions or in opposition to "content-producing" roles.
- Fewer agreed with the statement "My organization's products demonstrate diversity and inclusiveness of the audience" (48%) than "My organization's products demonstrate journalistic ethics and responsibilities to the audience" (78%). This data point reinforces the need to bring more diverse perspectives into this profession, as Hispanic/Latinx, Asian and Black respondents were more likely to agree with the diversity and inclusiveness sentiment than White respondents.
- The community is global. While the majority of respondents were from the U.S. (54%), the survey received responses from 32 countries with 10% from Germany and 8% from Brazil.
- The top requested tool or skill development areas in the survey were "career development," "organizational management" and "cultural change," confirming the need for the support of more strategic than hard skills.
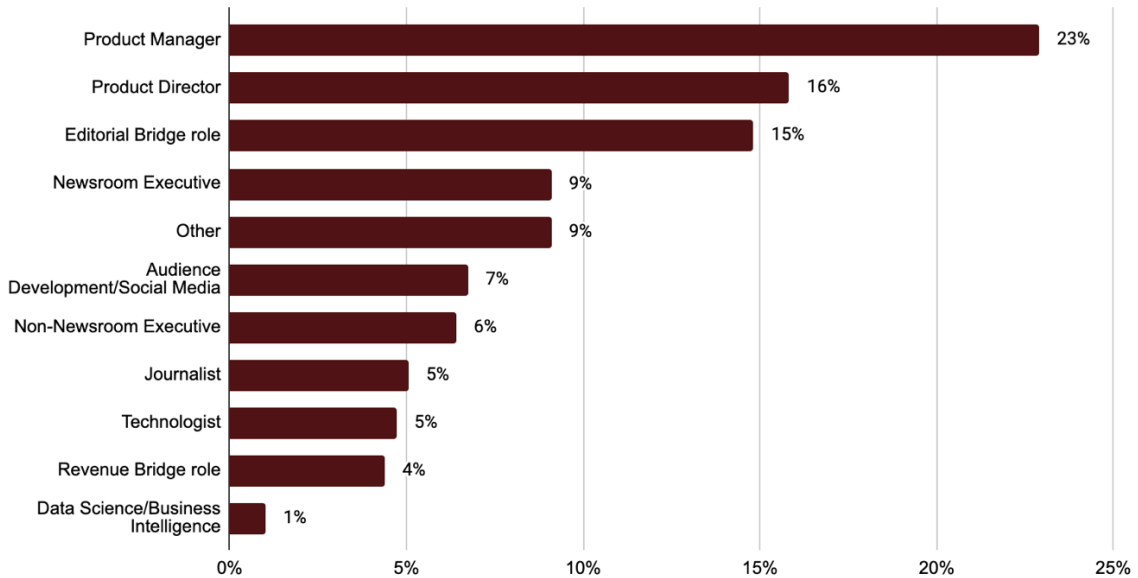
Read on for the full report of the State of the News Product Community in 2020.

Product, bridge and audience positions

While respondents were identified because of their interest in and/or proximity to product functions in their organizations, they were asked to identify the category of their position. Some indicated that they worked in a product-specific role, as Product Manager (23%) or Product Director (16%). Others indicated emphases in Audience (7%), Editorial Bridge -- editorial function specifically working with product managers (15%) -- and Revenue Bridge -- business function specifically working with product managers (4%) – roles. These responses

indicate a breadth of product function categories with which respondents identified supporting product activities.

Position Categories

Position	Percentage
Product Manager	23%
Product Director	16%
Editorial Bridge role	15%
Newsroom Executive	9%
Other	9%
Audience Development/Social Media	7%
Non-Newsroom Executive	6%
Journalist	5%
Technologist	5%
Revenue Bridge role	4%
Data Science/Business Intelligence	1%

Respondents were also asked to provide their specific job title. Many job titles included the word "product" (33%). These titles include various levels (for example, senior or associate) of product manager, product developer and product designer, as well as management and executive positions at the director, vice president and other leadership levels. The word "digital" was used in 13% of the job titles.

## Young and female, but diversity improvements needed

Gender Distribution Within Age Groups

Female ■ Male ■

| Age Group	Female	Male
18-24	69%	31%
25-34	60%	40%
35-44	47%	52%
45-54	34%	66%
55-64	54%	46%
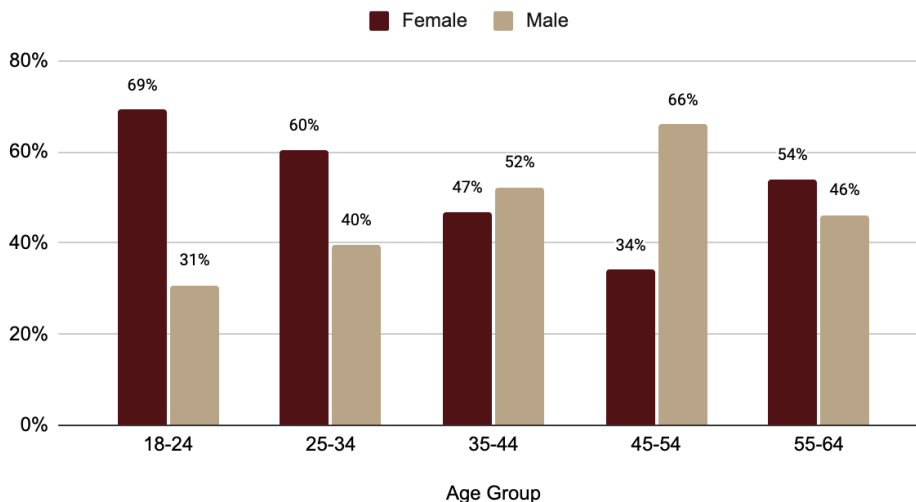
The sample of professionals was equally represented by gender with slightly more females responding than males (51% female and 49% male). Respondents mostly fell into the age groups 25-34 (37%) and 35-44 (37%). The younger age groups showed a higher representation of women, with 69% of the 18-24 age group and 60% of the 25-34 age group identifying as female. Sixty-six percent of the 45-54 age group identified as male.
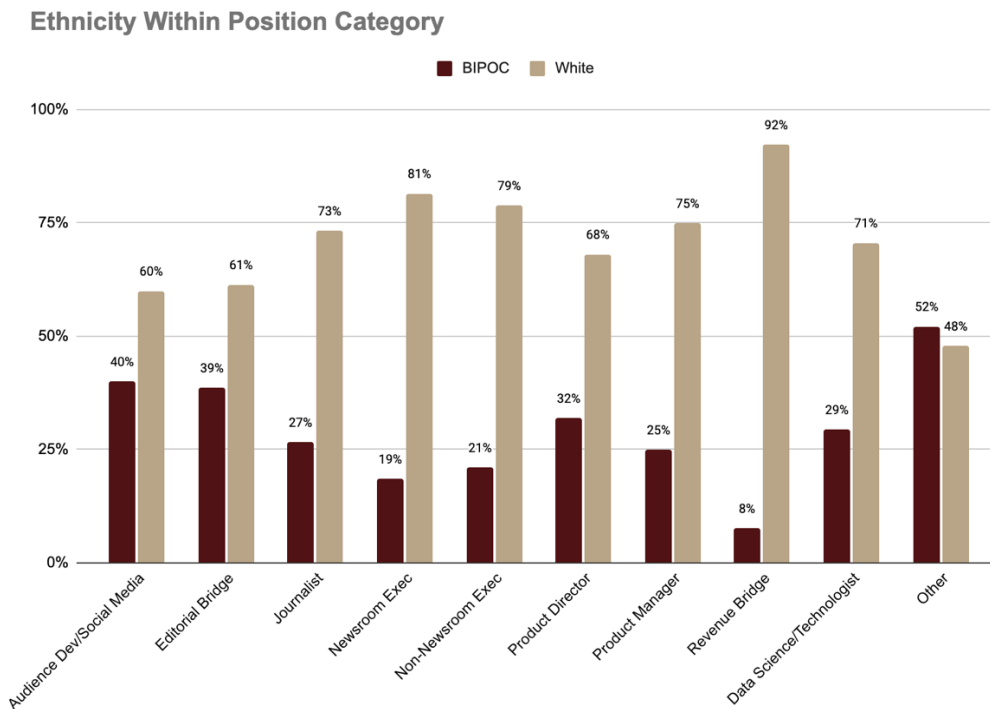
Gender Within Position Categories
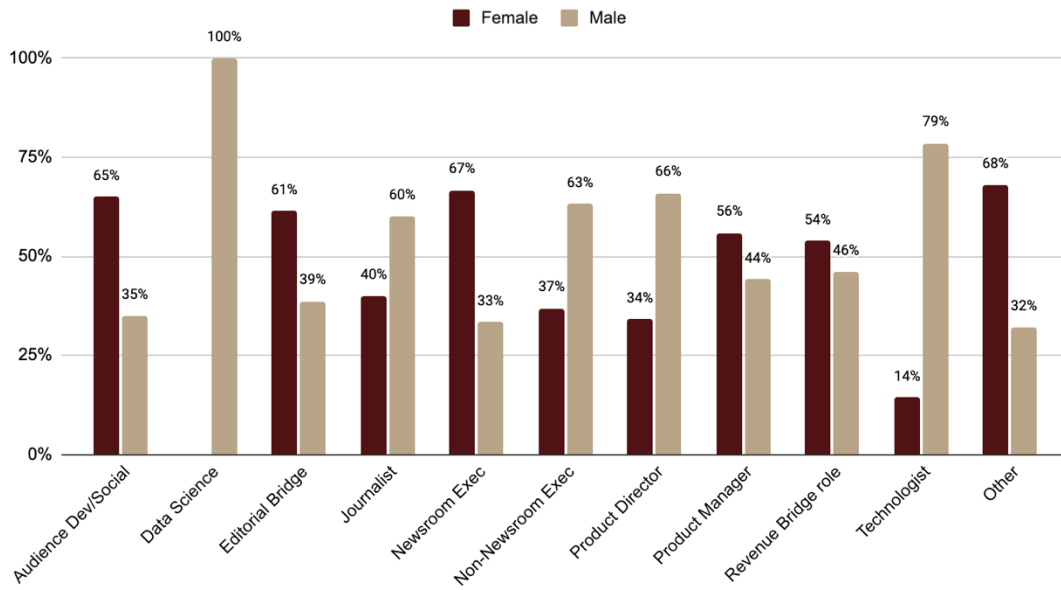
Females were more highly represented in the Audience Development, Editorial Bridge and News Executive position categories, while males were more highly represented as Journalists, Non-Newsroom Executives and Product Directors. Slightly more females (56%) than males (44%) were in the Product Manager role. Looking at the Data Science and Technologist roles combined, men were prominent in those positions. Combine this trend with the types of journalists present in this survey (data journalists, etc.), it will be important to continue to analyze the gender breakdown within positions and competencies over time.

Ethnicity of Respondents
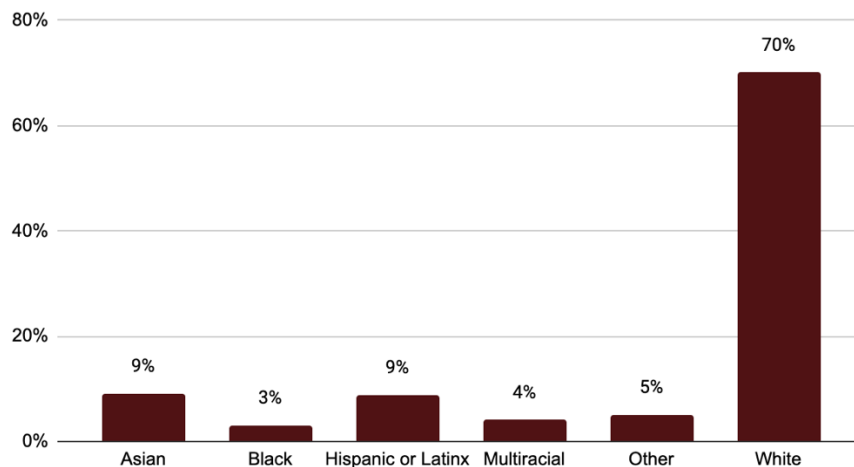
In terms of ethnicity, 70% of respondents identified as White, with Hispanic/Latinx (9%), Asian (9%), Black 3%), Multiracial (4%) making up less than 30% of the survey. This is generally indicative of the lack of diversity in the product community. Gender was relatively equally distributed within the ethnicity distribution. These trends are reflective of the lack of diversity in the product community and represent opportunities for improvement in hiring practices and career support.

Ethnicity Within Position Category

Combining the ethnicity categories into a Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) category showed relatively similar breakdowns within position categories, with exceptions in the Revenue Bridge category, which had a higher representation of White respondents (92%) and the Other category, which had more equal representation between White and BIPOC respondents. Many of the BIPOC respondents who chose Other, indicated business and project functions that did not align with the categories provided in the survey.

Large legacy companies or small digital news organizations

A majority of respondents worked for a legacy media organization with a print or broadcast component – 45%. Of that group, the majority (62%) worked for a company with more than 500 employees. Digital media organizations without a print or broadcast component comprised 16% of the sample. Respondents in that group worked for smaller organizations with 64% at companies with fewer than 100 employees.

Organization Size as a Percent of Organization Type

Legend: < 10 | 10-99 | 100-499 | > 500
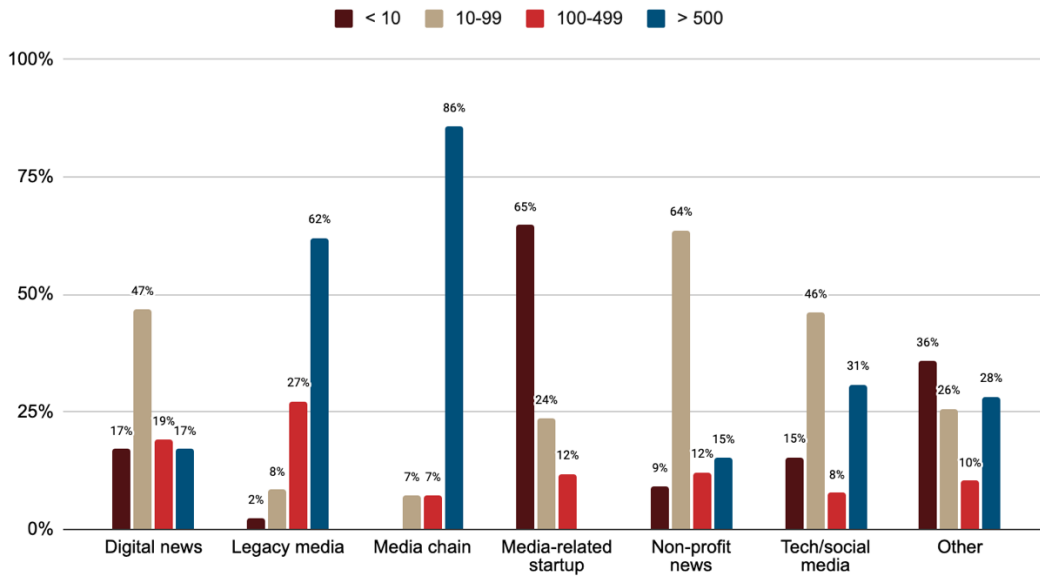
Although product professionals work across the globe, the sample was heavily skewed toward respondents in the U.S. This was largely due to the survey originating in the U.S., with an email list that originated primarily from U.S. events. The survey was presented in English. However, with 46% of respondents from outside the U.S. from 31 countries, global perspectives are broadly represented. Germany contributed 10% of respondents and Brazil had 8%. See full list of countries represented in the survey in Appendix A.

Organization Type - Non U.S. vs U.S.

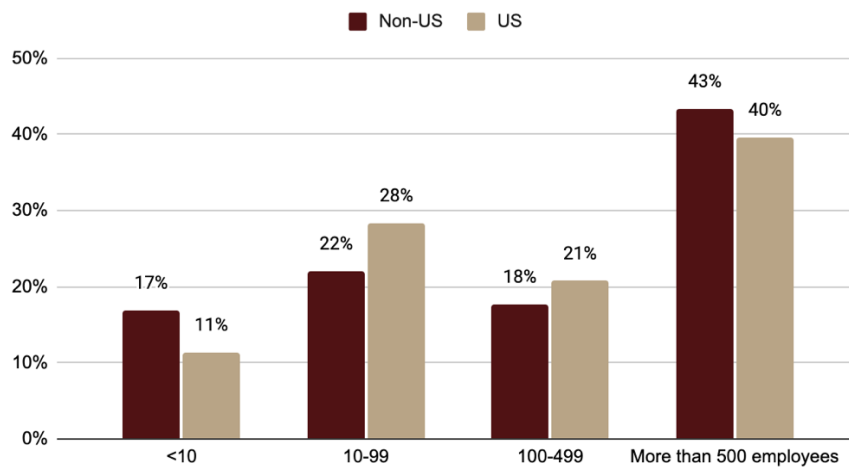Legend: Non-US | US
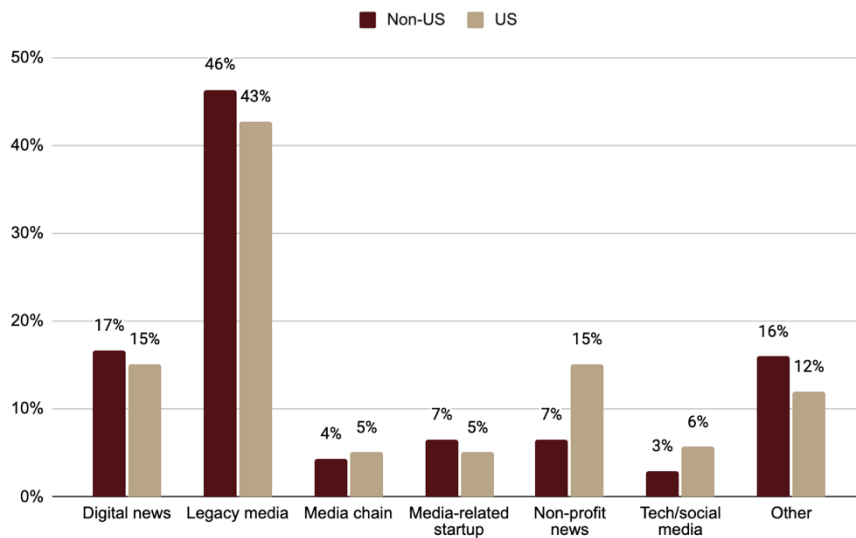
Respondents in U.S. and non-U.S. companies, however, shared organizational characteristics. For example, within the U.S., the community consists of 43% legacy media organizations and 15% digital news organizations. With non-U.S. respondents, legacy media organizations were 46% and digital news
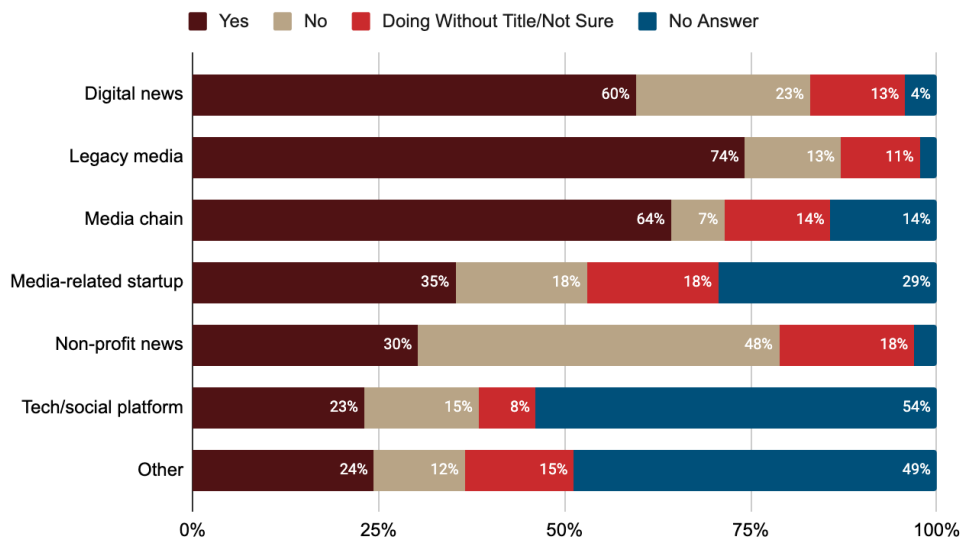
organizations represented 17%. The one exception was a difference in non-profit news respondents with 15% percent of U.S. respondents and 7% for non-U.S. respondents working for a non-profit news organization.

The majority of non-U.S. respondents worked for large organizations with more than 500 employees (43%), while in the U.S. that percentage was 40%. Thus, while more should be done to capture global implications of product functions, the survey results indicate similar trends in which product functions were represented.

Company Size - Non U.S. vs U.S.

■ Non-US ■ US

	<10	10-99	100-499	More than 500 employees
Non-US	17%	22%	18%	43%
US	11%	28%	21%	40%

Uncertainty about dedicated product teams

Dedicated Product Team

■ Yes ■ No ■ Doing Without Title/Not Sure ■ No Answer

	Yes	No	Doing Without Title/Not Sure	No Answer
Digital news	60%	23%	13%	4%
Legacy media	74%	13%	11%	
Media chain	64%	7%	14%	14%
Media-related startup	35%	18%	18%	29%
Non-profit news	30%	48%	18%	
Tech/social platform	23%	15%	8%	54%
Other	24%	12%	15%	49%

Respondents were asked if their organization had a dedicated product team. Overall, 55% responded "Yes." While digital news (60%), legacy media (74%) and media chains (64%) responded positively to that statement, only 30% of non-profit news organizations indicated having a dedicated product team. A large number of respondents did not provide an answer to this question (13%) or responded "I think people are doing this work without the titles or resources" or "Not sure" (13%). This indicates a general level of uncertainty about

the existence of product teams particularly for media-related startups and technology platforms, as well as those in the "Other" category. This may indicate that smaller organizations and those with limited resources are not yet able to officially organize product resources. This could also indicate product being at a more central focus in some organizations and not delineated as a product team.

Well educated with communication emphases

The community represents a well-educated group, with 47% indicating an undergraduate degree and 49% indicating a graduate or professional degree as their highest attained education.

Fifty-one percent indicated having a degree in journalism, and 17% indicated another communication degree (for example communication studies or public relations). However, 31% indicated a different degree altogether. Most commonly mentioned as "Other" were degrees in English and political

Degrees Held

science. These trends indicate that a technical degree is not necessary to work in a media product role. Those with traditional communication backgrounds are moving their careers into these positions. This further highlights a community in need of training and career development support and opportunities for media education.
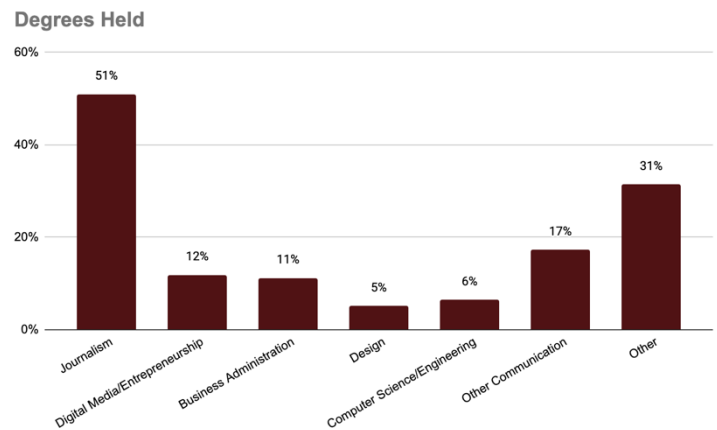
Females were more likely to hold journalism degrees (63%) and digital media/entrepreneurship (57%) and males were more likely to have degrees in business administration (58%) and computer science/engineering (58%). These trends are also reflective of the academic disciplines at large, but also indicate an area in which media education can play a role in influencing.
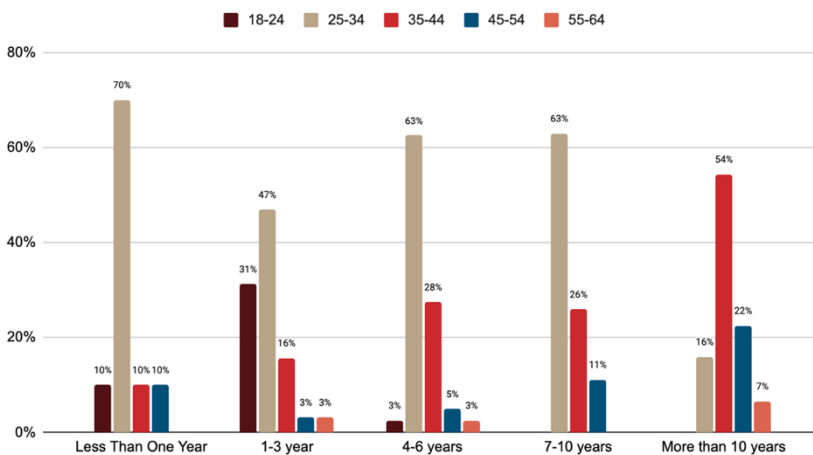
Youth and experience

While the community is relatively young, most indicated extensive journalism experience. Forty-eight percent indicated they had more than 10 years of experience in journalism. Of those indicating more than 10 years, 54% were in the 35-44 age range. Of those indicating 7-10 years of experience, 62% were in the 25-24 age group.
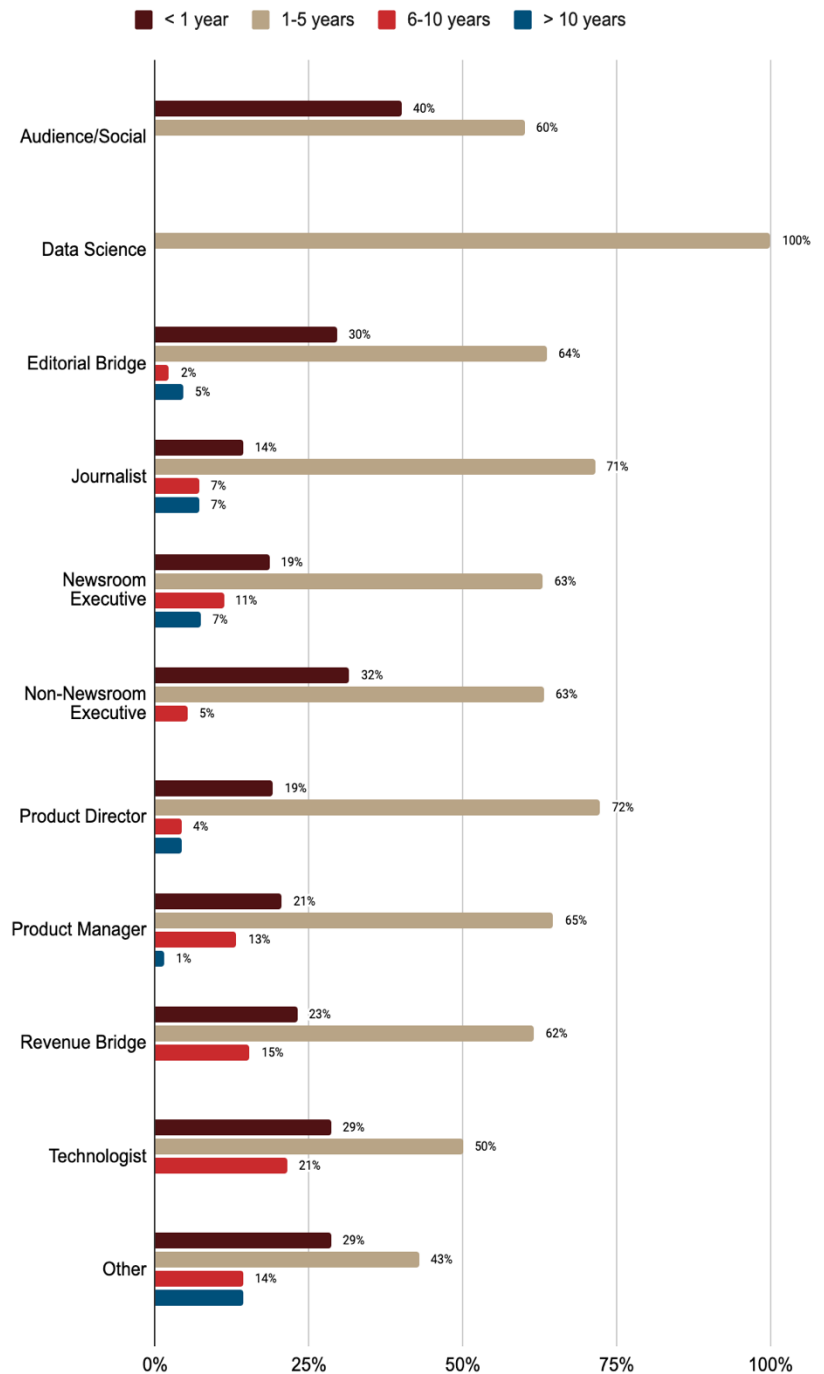
Trailblazing new roles

Eighty-nine percent of respondents had been in their current jobs for less than five years and almost two-thirds of the respondents said their specific positions did not exist five years ago. These trends held in most position categories, particularly those in Audience Development and Editorial Bridge roles, indicating the newness of these functions and pointing to the career development needs of these roles.

As well, those who identified as the more traditional "Journalist" role also indicated that they had been in their position fewer than five years (86%) and their role did not exist five years ago (71%). The respondents in the "journalist" category often included the word "data" in their specific job title, with many identifying as "data journalist," "data editor," and "data analyst." The study highlights that the conception of what a journalist is and does is affected by media's shift to product functions.

Respondents also indicated that most (59%) came to their current position from another company, whether in the same or a different industry. Of those respondents, 65% came from a different company in the same industry. These trends held across all job categories.

Of those who came from a different company, 49% made a lateral move in the product field. For those moving from within the same company, 42% were promoted within the product field. These will be important trends to comprehend in regard to career development and retention for those in product-related roles.

Years in Position by Position Category

Legend: ■ < 1 year ■ 1-5 years ■ 6-10 years ■ > 10 years

- **Audience/Social**: < 1 year 40%, 1-5 years 60%
- **Data Science**: 1-5 years 100%
- **Editorial Bridge**: < 1 year 30%, 1-5 years 64%, 6-10 years 2%, > 10 years 5%
- **Journalist**: < 1 year 14%, 1-5 years 71%, 6-10 years 7%, > 10 years 7%
- **Newsroom Executive**: < 1 year 19%, 1-5 years 63%, 6-10 years 11%, > 10 years 7%
- **Non-Newsroom Executive**: < 1 year 32%, 1-5 years 63%, 6-10 years 5%
- **Product Director**: < 1 year 19%, 1-5 years 72%, 6-10 years 4%
- **Product Manager**: < 1 year 21%, 1-5 years 65%, 6-10 years 13%, > 10 years 1%
- **Revenue Bridge**: < 1 year 23%, 1-5 years 62%, 6-10 years 15%
- **Technologist**: < 1 year 29%, 1-5 years 50%, 6-10 years 21%
- **Other**: < 1 year 29%, 1-5 years 43%, 6-10 years 14%

Career development and training needs

Respondents were asked to rate their perceptions on a range of topics associated with their roles and organizations, using a Likert scale for responses (5 – Strongly Agree; 1-Strongly Disagree). The chart below collapses Strongly Agree and Agree responses and Strongly Disagree and Disagree responses. Results demonstrate that statements associated with career development and support received lower percentage of agreement. For example, only 18% agreed with the statement "I have a clearly defined career path" and 21% agreed with the statement "The journalism industry provides career development support for my role."

Product Perceptions
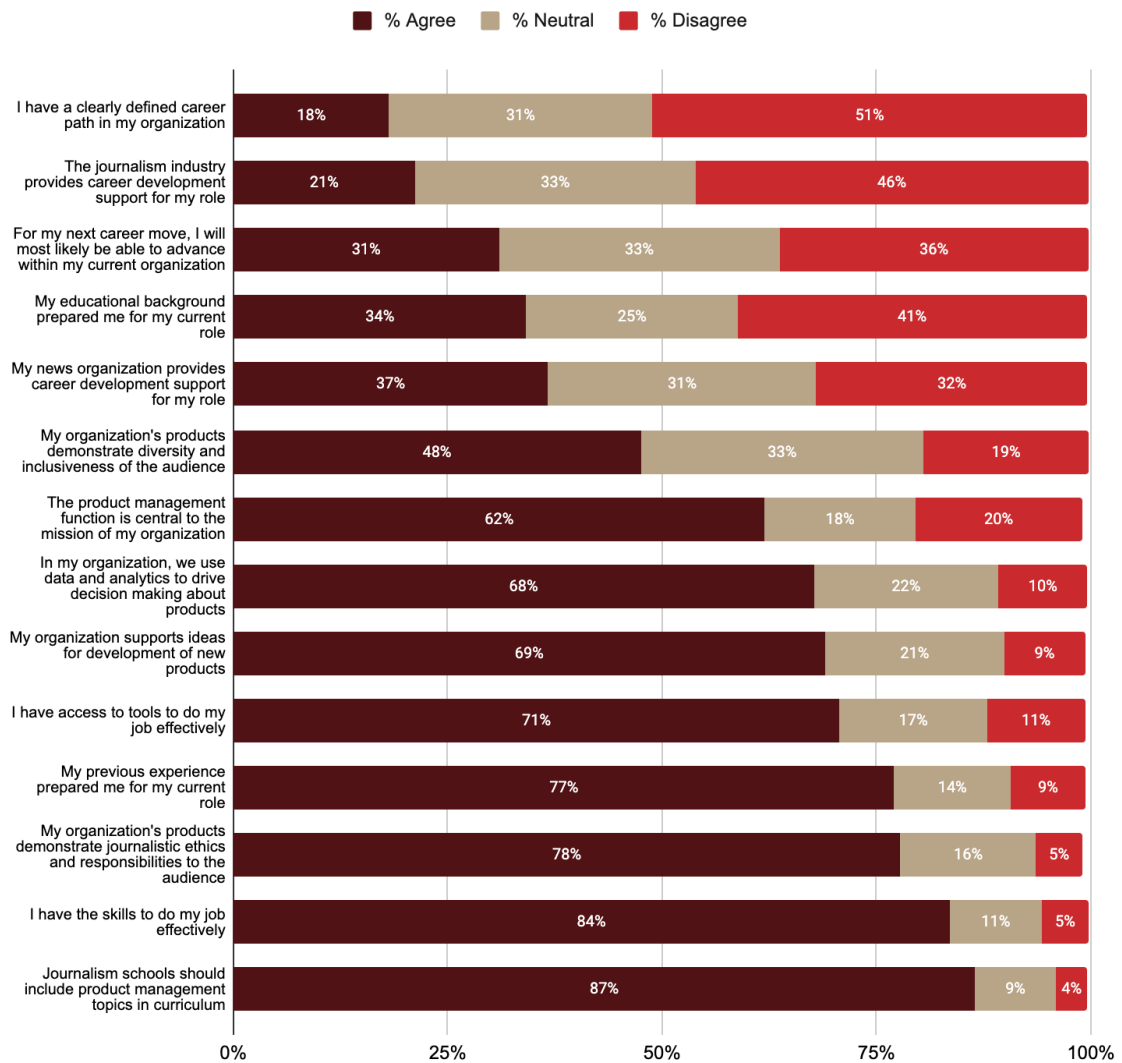
Additionally, few in this educated group indicated that their educational background had prepared them for their current role (34% agreement). However, a resounding majority agreed with the statement "Journalism schools should include product management topics in curriculum" (87%), indicating opportunities for journalism schools to address product topics in courses and degree programs.

More agreed with the statement "My organization's products demonstrate journalistic ethics and responsibilities to the audience" (78%) than "My organization's products demonstrate diversity and inclusiveness of the audience" (48%). Hispanic/Latinx, Asian and Black respondents were more likely to agree with the diversity and inclusiveness sentiment (57%) than White respondents (44%). This reinforces the need for diverse perspectives to be hired into product roles to improve representation in products.
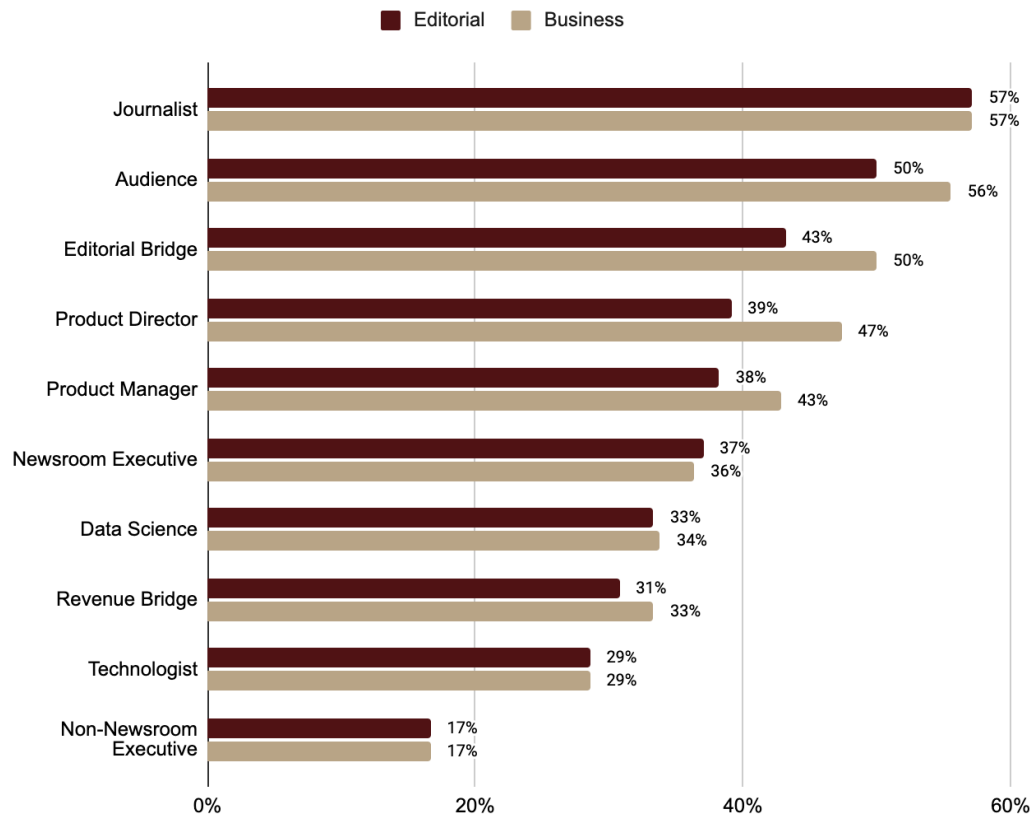
Perceptions of influence within organizations

Respondents indicated the level of influence they felt product professionals held in their organization compared to other functions with the following statements:

> Product professionals have _____ influence compared to editorial professionals in my organization.

> Product professionals have _____ influence compared to business/finance professionals in my organization.

The choices for these items were "More," "Equal" or "Less." In comparison to editorial functions, 38% indicated having less influence in their organization. Journalists, Audience Development, Editorial Bridge, Product Directors and Product Managers all indicated higher than average selections of "less" influence compared to editorial roles.

Position Category Indicating Product Having "Less" Influence

■ Editorial   ■ Business

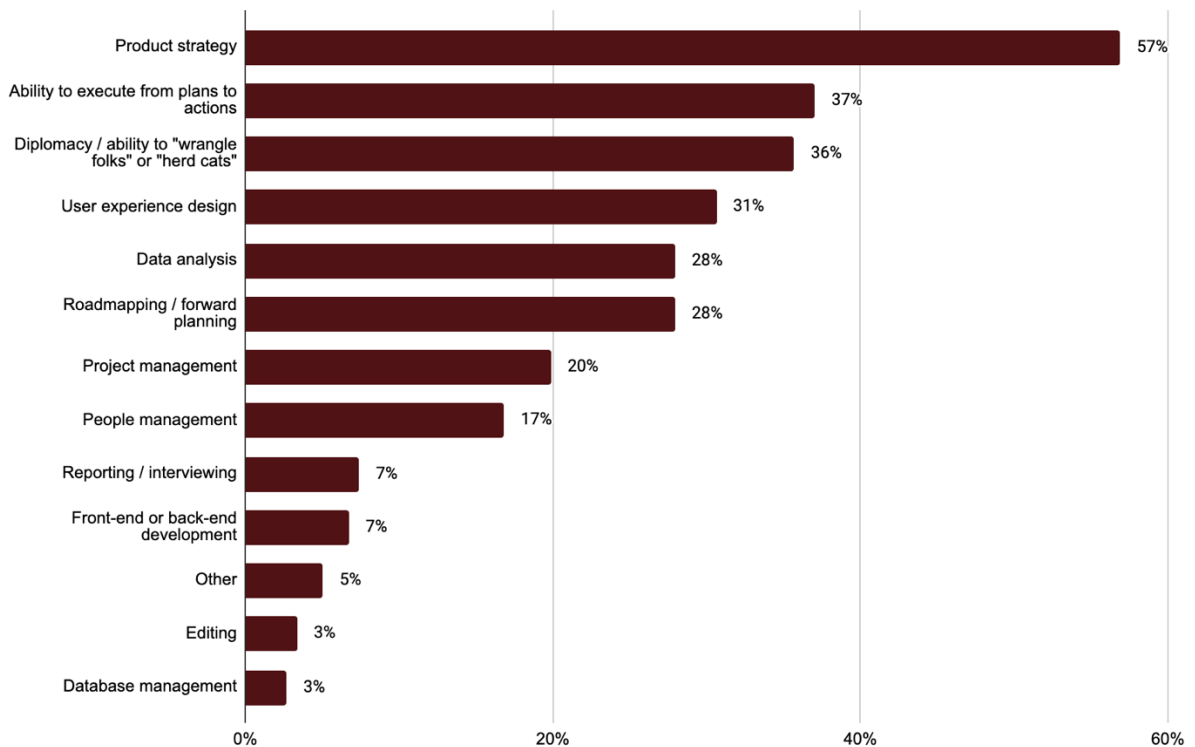| Position	Editorial	Business
Journalist	57%	57%
Audience	50%	56%
Editorial Bridge	43%	50%
Product Director	39%	47%
Product Manager	38%	43%
Newsroom Executive	37%	36%
Data Science	33%	34%
Revenue Bridge	31%	33%
Technologist	29%	29%
Non-Newsroom Executive	17%	17%

In comparison to business function, 35% indicated having less influence. Journalists, Newsroom Executives, Audience Development and Editorial Bridge roles indicated higher than average selections of "less" influence compared to business roles. These trends will be important for media leadership to understand if product is to become more central to an organization's mission.

Strategic thinking over hard skills

Respondents were asked to identify up to three of the most important skills needed to successfully build news products. "Product strategy" was the most frequently mentioned skill selected by 57%. "Ability to execute from plans to actions" (37%), "Diplomacy/ability to 'wrangle folks' or herd cats'" (36%) and "User experience design "(31%) were the next most frequently mentioned skills. The distribution of twelve skills and numerous "Other" responses, however, indicate a broad set of competencies that was not consistent across respondents.

Most Important Skills

Skill	%
Product strategy	57%
Ability to execute from plans to actions	37%
Diplomacy / ability to "wrangle folks" or "herd cats"	36%
User experience design	31%
Data analysis	28%
Roadmapping / forward planning	28%
Project management	20%
People management	17%
Reporting / interviewing	7%
Front-end or back-end development	7%
Other	5%
Editing	3%
Database management	3%

While 28% identified "data analysis" as an important skill, only 7% selected "Front-end or back-end development," de-emphasizing the need for product professionals to have programming experience. Only 7% indicated reporting/interviewing skills, and only 3% indicated editing, as being important to the product function, further delineating it from traditional journalism functions. Responses to "Other" included "empathy," "ethics," "listening," "understanding tech practices," and "user research."

Types of support needed

Respondents were able to select all resources they desired in support of product functions from a list of eleven items. Sixty-eight percent indicated the need for "Documentation and best practices for popular tools." In high demand were "Community Slack group" (65%), "Newsletter" (64%), "Webinar-based training" (61%), as well as "interviews with and articles by industry experts" (61%). "In-person gatherings at other conferences" (55%) and "Conferences" (47%) dedicated to product thinking were also selected as desirable activities. These trends indicate a range of needs that encompass both structure and community support.

Resources Needed
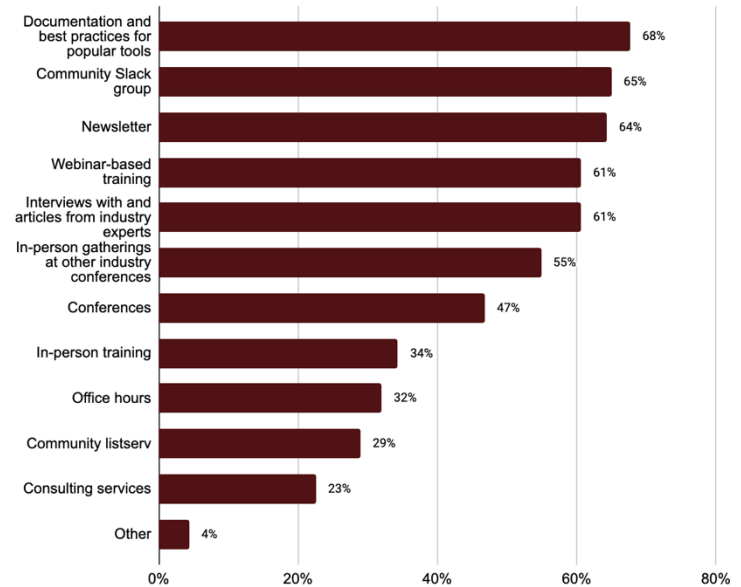
Respondents were able to select all that applied from a list of ten skills needed. "Career development" was the most mentioned by 59% of respondents, further identifying the need for attention to career support. This was followed closely by "Organizational management" (56%) and "Cultural change" (52%). These trends indicate a function in need of high-level vision and cultural insight, more so than any specific tool or skill training.

While "Front-end or back-end development" was not widely mentioned as an important product management skill above, 28% indicated the need for "Coding language proficiency training." This data point presents an opportunity for further understanding of the importance of technical knowledge.

Skill Development Needed
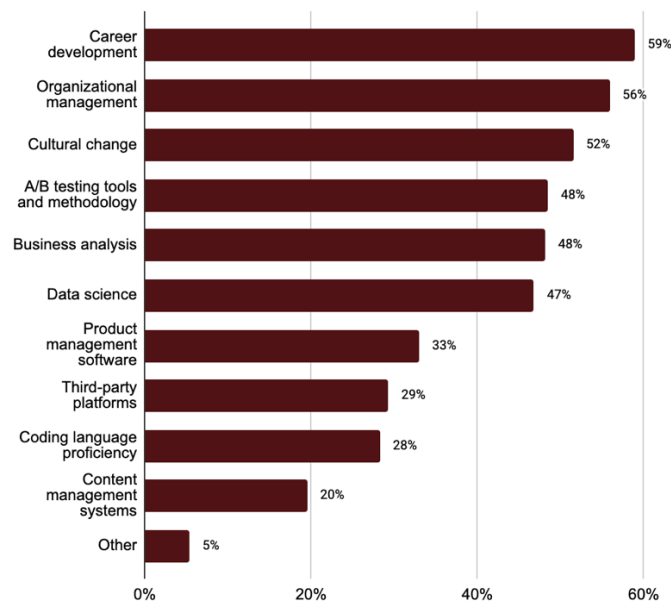
Challenges vary by organization type

Respondents were asked to indicate "What challenges do you currently face in your news product work within your organization?" They were able to select all that applied across eight selections, as well as provide "Other" responses.
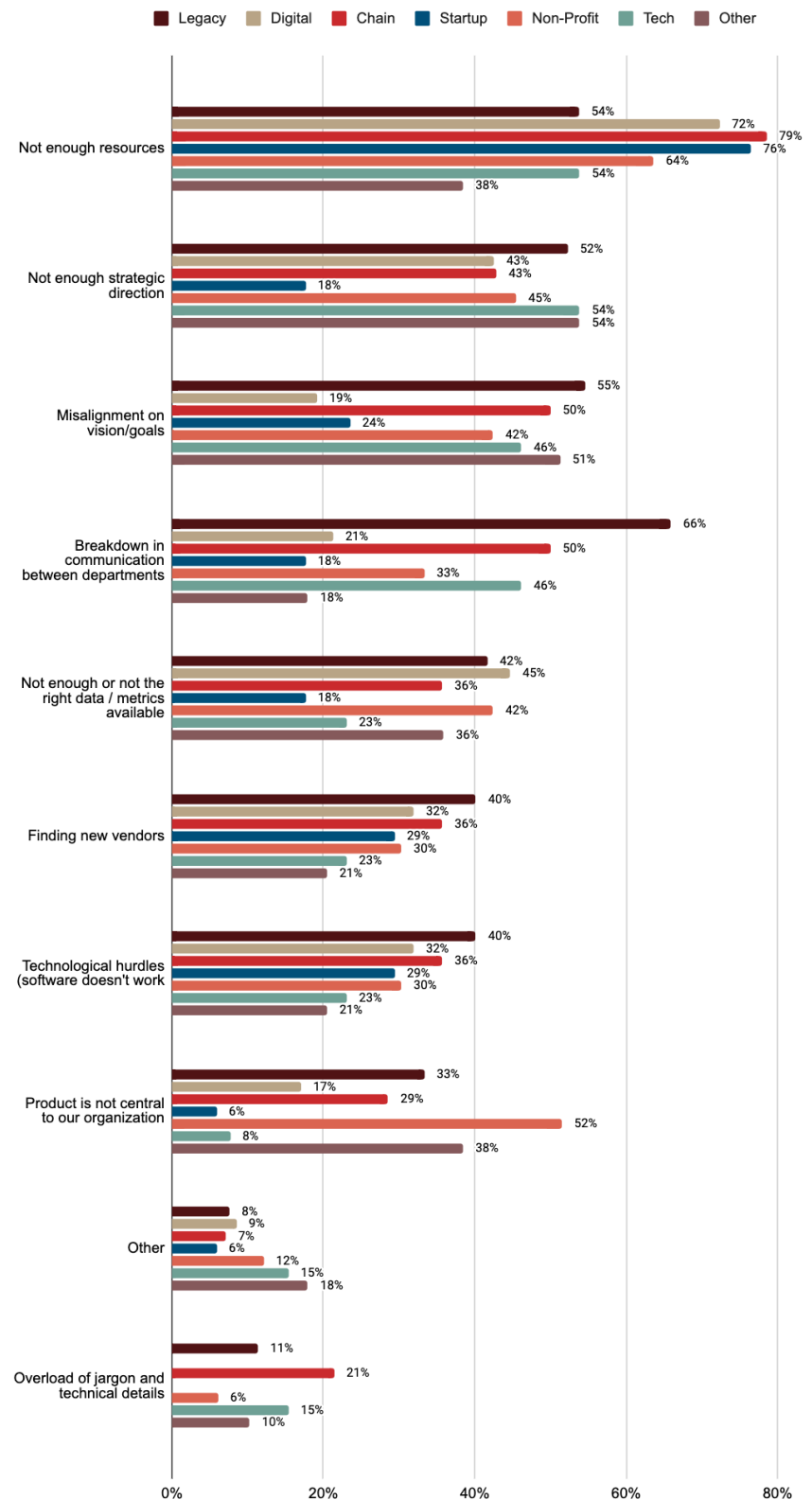
The most frequently mentioned challenge was "Not enough resources" (58%). Also frequently mentioned were "Not enough strategic direction" (48%), "Misalignment on vision/goals" (45%) and "Breakdown in communication between departments" (44%).

Respondents from legacy media companies mentioned "Breakdown in communication between departments" most frequently (67%). Digital news organizations were most likely to mention "Not enough resources" (72.3%) as a challenge, indicating challenges varying by organization type.

Primary products include websites and content management systems
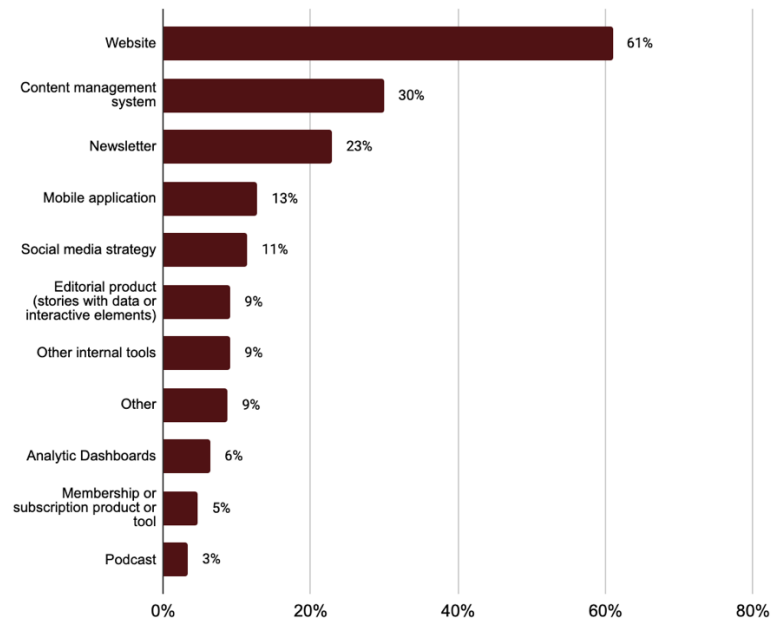
Respondents were able to select up to three primary products on which they worked. Results indicate a range of primary product activities. Most mentioned was the "Website" (61%), demonstrating the continued importance of an organization's web presence. Related to the website is the "Content management system" (30%). Twenty-three percent indicated working on a "Newsletter" and 13% worked on a "Mobile application." Only 9% of this survey's respondents indicated working

Challenges by Organization Type

Legend: Legacy | Digital | Chain | Startup | Non-Profit | Tech | Other

Not enough resources
- Legacy: 54%
- Digital: 72%
- Chain: 79%
- Startup: 76%
- Non-Profit: 64%
- Tech: 54%
- Other: 38%

Not enough strategic direction
- Legacy: 52%
- Digital: 43%
- Chain: 43%
- Startup: 18%
- Non-Profit: 45%
- Tech: 54%
- Other: 54%

Misalignment on vision/goals
- Legacy: 55%
- Digital: 19%
- Chain: 50%
- Startup: 24%
- Non-Profit: 42%
- Tech: 46%
- Other: 51%

Breakdown in communication between departments
- Legacy: 66%
- Digital: 21%
- Chain: 50%
- Startup: 18%
- Non-Profit: 33%
- Tech: 46%
- Other: 18%

Not enough or not the right data / metrics available
- Legacy: 42%
- Digital: 45%
- Chain: 36%
- Startup: 18%
- Non-Profit: 42%
- Tech: 23%
- Other: 36%

Finding new vendors
- Legacy: 40%
- Digital: 32%
- Chain: 36%
- Startup: 29%
- Non-Profit: 30%
- Tech: 23%
- Other: 21%

Technological hurdles (software doesn't work
- Legacy: 40%
- Digital: 32%
- Chain: 36%
- Startup: 29%
- Non-Profit: 30%
- Tech: 23%
- Other: 21%

Product is not central to our organization
- Legacy: 33%
- Digital: 17%
- Chain: 29%
- Startup: 6%
- Non-Profit: 52%
- Tech: 8%
- Other: 38%

Other
- Legacy: 8%
- Digital: 9%
- Chain: 7%
- Startup: 6%
- Non-Profit: 12%
- Tech: 15%
- Other: 18%

Overload of jargon and technical details
- Legacy: 11%
- Chain: 21%
- Non-Profit: 6%
- Tech: 15%
- Other: 10%

on an "Editorial product." "Other" responses included a range of artificial intelligence products, voice-response interfaces and video and audio projects, and event platforms.

Primary Products Worked On

Product	Percentage
Website	61%
Content management system	30%
Newsletter	23%
Mobile application	13%
Social media strategy	11%
Editorial product (stories with data or interactive elements)	9%
Other internal tools	9%
Other	9%
Analytic Dashboards	6%
Membership or subscription product or tool	5%
Podcast	3%

Intersections and collaborations versus traditional characterizations

Respondents were asked to "Briefly describe what you do. If you had to explain your job to a family member or friend, how would you do that?" The responses demonstrated four themes: intersection (specifically mentioning "bridge", "intersection" or similar wording), multi-function (mentioning multiple functions implying a bridge role without using specific bridge or intersection phrasing), support (mentioning supporting or helping a function or functions) and non-content (defining role in opposition to content-based positions).

- In many cases, respondents were direct with their usage of intersectional terms. For example, a respondent in an editorial bridge role in a digital media organization described their role in this way. "I'm the **bridge** between editorial, business and tech in order to execute different sorts of digital projects." A product manager in a legacy media company retained the familiarity of the "journalist" description by describing their role in this way. "I often say that I'm a journalist that works in the **intersection** of traditional journalism with audience development and business."
- Some described their role across functions, without specifically using "intersection" phrasing, as did this product director in a legacy company. "On the **product side**, I manage a team to think, develop and manage our media websites and mobile apps; on the **editorial side**, I work on changing newsroom skills." A respondent in an editorial bridge role in a legacy organization emphasized collaboration across roles. "I represent the newsroom in our product teams and vice versa. I'm an **editorial person**

who works with designers and developers." This description also gave nod to the traditional editorial function.

- Some continue to describe their role as a support or help function, as did a product manager for a media chain. "I work on technology and tools that **help** journalists do their jobs more easily, and **help** readers get the info they need more easily." A product manager for a legacy media company described their role similarly, focusing on efficiency value. "I **help** teams of journalists innovate without wasting a bunch of time and resources."
- Others made a distinction between themselves and content-based functions, as a product manager in a legacy organization described. "I am responsible for the development of the storytelling platform -- everything about the webpage you're looking at **apart from the details of the content**." A product director at a digital media organization used this description: "I run everything **that's not the production of journalism**, so the website, the apps, the newsletter, the subscription product, and all revenue including ads."

These themes indicate a broad field that is internalizing its ability to make connections and work across functions. The trends indicate a shift to intersection and multi-function descriptions. Some still include traditional journalist and editorial roles, while some embrace a support theme and definitions in opposition to content-based roles. The former represents more innovative thinking associated with collaboration and teamwork, while the later continues to reinforce traditional journalism values, routines and power structures. How professionals describe their roles will be important to track over time as the product function in news develops.

Conclusions

This study identifies important trends associated with the emergence and adoption of product management competencies as media organizations embrace innovation and strive for sustainability. The results indicate that the path to professionalization of product functions is filled with contradictions. It is a field diverse by gender, but in need of improvement in terms of ethnicity, indicating opportunities to improve diversity and inclusiveness of products in relationship to communities. These professionals are well educated, but don't perceive their education as relevant to their current role. However, they indicate opportunities for journalism education to offer training in this area. They are young and work in relatively new positions, but have years of journalism experience and don't feel they have a clearly defined career path and support. Most didn't identify coding as a primary skill for product professionals, but many find it an important one to develop. Many expressed an uncertainty about the existence of a dedicated product team in their organization. And many feel the product role holds less influence in their organization than the more traditional business or editorial functions.

The professionals in these roles are charged with moving their organizations forward by managing innovative digital products while they are negotiating their own roles, routines, processes and places. The results outline a field in need of structure, but reliant on the flexibility and agility required to embrace the opportunities that innovation presents. It is a function seeking vision, direction and support, more so than standardization and compartmentalization. Product is moving toward the center and away from the periphery of media

organizations, which may contribute to organizational tensions (Kueng, 2020), and these dynamics must be negotiated for successful product implementations.

While more than just a single role, product management now encompasses a range of positions and functions focused on understanding audience needs and providing digital solutions. Strategy around recruitment, hiring, retention, and career paths for all innovation-based roles must be addressed to assure their integration into industry culture (Kosterich, 2020). Product management introduces a profound shift in the mission of journalism, from a culture of reporting and editing on limited platforms to one that is focused on building trust by representing communities and solving problems across products. It is a field in transition, moving from the boundaries of media organizations to roles bridging functions. Product has the potential to become the bedrock of journalism, if the profession can negotiate an adapted purpose, address power dynamics and embrace not just roles in product management, but an emphasis on product thinking throughout organizations. As such, these trends will serve to drive innovation in academic curriculum (Royal, 2017) and faculty development required to support media's new role in society (Royal & Smith, 2019). How organizations adopt and adapt to these trends will be important to their future sustainability and that of the journalism industry.

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Appendix A
List of countries of respondents

Country	# respondents
United States	159
Germany	31
Brazil	23
Great Britain	17
Argentina	7
Australia	7
Canada	7
France	7
Austria	3
India	3
Switzerland	3
Finland	2
Italy	2
Netherlands	2
Philippines	2
South Africa	2
Spain	2
Sweden	2
Belgium	1
Chile	1
Colombia	1
Denmark	1
Ecuador	1
Georgia	1
Greece	1
Israel	1
New Zealand	1
Pakistan	1
Portugal	1
Slovak Republic	1
Turkey	1
Uruguay	1

About the Author

Cindy Royal is a professor in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Texas State University where she leads the Digital Media Innovation program and directs the Media Innovation Lab. She completed PhD studies at The University of Texas in 2005. Her students have gone on to digital careers with The New York Times, Texas Tribune, Insider, Inc., Gannett, Texas Restaurant Association, H-E-B, NPR, South By Southwest and more. In 2013, she was accepted to the Knight Journalism Fellowship at Stanford University and named Teacher of the Year by the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication/Scripps Howard. She received the Presidential Award for Excellence in Teaching at Texas State in 2014, the Presidential Award for Excellence for Service at Texas State in 2020 and is a two-time winner of Texas State's Everette Swinney Excellence in Teaching Award. Her research on news product management has been published in the #ISOJ Journal and Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly.

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Partnership

The **News Product Alliance** is a global community of support and practice for news product professionals. They believe news product professionals — those with the ability to strategically align business, audience and technology goals while integrating journalism ethics — are key to building sustainable and ethical news organizations. The News Product Alliance is the first to organize the community of individuals doing this challenging work within the digital transformation of news organizations. Visit newsproduct.org for more information.

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