

# The Media Consumption Habits of the C-suite

HOW DO BUSINESS LEADERS STAY INFORMED?  
A PANEL OF CXOS FILLS US IN.





## MEET THE PANELISTS



**LISA WALSH**  
Chief Executive Officer  
*Truco Products*



**JEFF LITVACK**  
Chief Executive Officer  
*AdWeek*



**ADRYANNA  
SUTHERLAND**  
Chief Operating Officer  
*Gyro*



**LISA MANN**  
Founder and Chief  
Executive Officer  
*Think Marketing*

C-level executives understand the importance of staying informed. These savvy leaders know that staying ahead in their market means listening to different opinions, monitoring world events and educating themselves on the emerging trends and issues that can affect their business.

This Executive Summary examines the media consumption habits of the C-suite. SmartBrief spoke with a panel of four CxOs to get their input on what they read, when they read and how much time they spend doing it. Our panelists include Lisa Walsh, chief executive officer for Truco Products, parent company of On the Border products; Jeff Litvack, chief executive officer of AdWeek; Adryanna Sutherland, chief operating officer at business advertising agency Gyro; and Lisa Mann, founder and chief executive officer of Think Marketing.

### HERE'S WHAT WE FOUND:

## READING IS A DAILY HABIT

C-level executives prioritize reading in their daily routines. [According to Business Insider](#), business magnate Warren Buffet reads six publications each morning, including the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Financial Times*. BuzzFeed founder and CEO [Jonah Peretti](#) spends his commute reading the sports and business sections of *The New York Times*. And FOCUS brands group president [Kat Cole](#) makes a point of checking her social-media feeds and preferred news outlets for important updates just after she gets up each morning.

Our panelists have similar practices. Each spends between 15 minutes to an hour, every day, reading about trends, customers and competitors in their markets. They have a sense of urgency with this practice.

"I absolutely make keeping up with industry news a priority; it is changing on a daily basis," Walsh says, noting that she targets news about the people, brands and companies that she follows. "I spend about 30 minutes a day reviewing digital news and catch up in-depth on the weekend for an hour or two."

Litvack divides his reading between news about the industries he serves — publishing and advertising — and general news. He spends about 15 minutes reading about publishing, another 15-30 minutes reading about advertising ("Our own stories and competitors," he says.) and finishes with 15-30 minutes of general news and industry updates.



He will file some reading away for the weekend. "One of my habits is that I'll click on a story and if I'm busy, I'll bookmark and read it later sometimes on weekends," he says. "I like to [OneTab](#) as a way to file stories away for future reading."

"I spend about an hour a day reading information about my industry and my clients and their industries," says Sutherland. "I spend a bit more time on the weekends catching up on stories I didn't have a chance to finish during the week and wandering around the web looking for interesting insights."

Mann says she spends about 15 minutes to an hour in the morning reading about her industry and business interests. She admits that it's tough to read in-depth each day. "I try to at least read headlines of all the articles," she says. "Hopefully, I get to click on a few each morning so that I can read a little deeper."

## THEY ARE MORNING PEOPLE

CxOs like to get a jump on their day. A [2016 study of executives by Quartz](#) found that 74% of respondents take their news first thing in the morning while another 20% read throughout the day. Only 6% read during the middle of the day or at night.

Our panel members use their early hours to dive into news and get a head start on work.

"[I read] first thing in the morning, usually on my phone or at my desk," says Walsh. She'll also use her downtime at night to catch up on what's happening in the world.

"[I] will often watch national news on TV that I have recorded before going to bed."

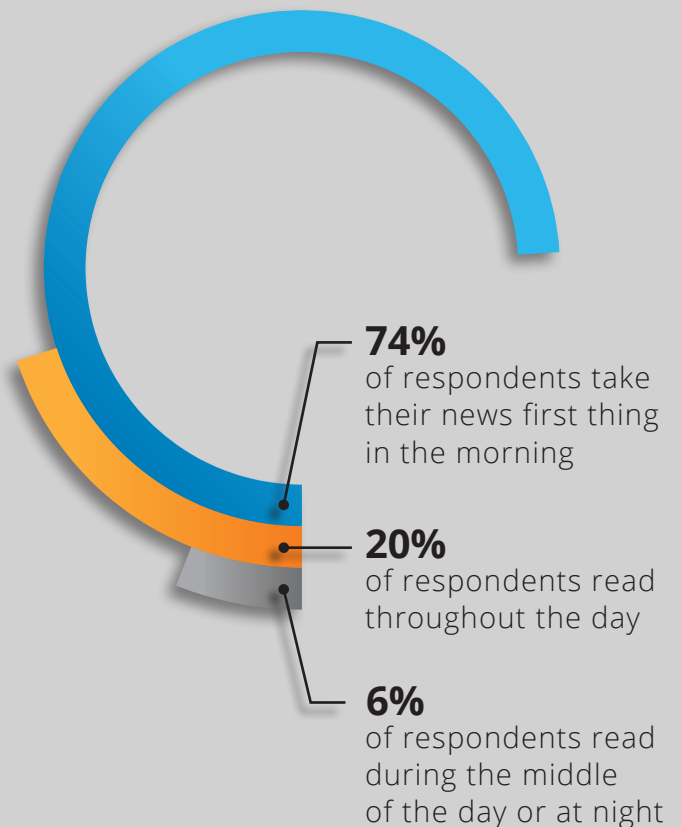
Litvack has similar habits. "I consume in the morning and evening the most, typically on the commute to and from the office and when I get into the office," he says. "I mostly read digitally on my phone and on my computer."

"My commute is generally reserved for calls because there is zero distraction during that time, other than traffic," says Sutherland. If she's not on her phone, though, she goes to her news. "If I don't have calls, I listen to NPR."

"I listen to podcasts while commuting or working out; that's when I go the deepest," Mann says. "At my kitchen counter is the headline reading and maybe a few clicks deeper."



“CxOs like to get a jump on their day.”



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## RELEVANCE MATTERS

Smart, pertinent content matters to this high-level reader. Subject lines and headlines grab their attention, but the articles must keep their interest, our panelists say.

“Subject line and article title matters a great deal to me,” says Mann. When she’s scanning her email feeds, she’s looking for headlines in her areas of interest. “For instance, I’m interested in plant nutrition businesses. So [I] read all the articles about emerging technologies in this area and changes in consumer demand.”

“Reading is more nuanced,” says Litvack. “The story has to appeal to me. I’m most interested in innovation, interesting stats, market research, competitor research.”

“The headline, the brand or company in the story, and the industry grab my attention,” says Sutherland. She prefers headlines that are targeted to her niche. “I gravitate to headlines with more specificity — such as ‘Find out what Amazon is doing in healthcare’ — versus more general knowledge content.”

“Subject line is the primary hook,” says Mann. “That will dictate whether I open and/or click through.”

## EMAIL IS THEIR PREFERRED INFORMATION SOURCE

“I use emails as my main method of finding news and articles,” Litvack says. Litvack’s response is consistent with Quartz’s

study that shows [94% of executives](#) say they use email newsletters to get their daily news fix. Websites are just behind [email at 89% with news apps at 74%](#). Our other panelists follow suit. They prefer email newsletters that give them a quick look at what’s breaking in their markets and the world. Other sources include radio and social media feeds.

“I subscribe to a variety of daily and weekly e-blast publications that give me quick, digestible headlines on what is happening across the marketplace, both macro and micro topics,” says Walsh. “I also scroll through social media venues — LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter — to see news that’s posted from people, brands and companies I follow.”

“I actually get a lot out of newsletters,” Sutherland says. “I get a few industry newsletters and I read 3-4 a day — even if I only have time to browse headlines, I get a lot of it.” Radio and news apps are also on her go-to list, but social media is not. “I’m not yet a big consumer of news and information on social platforms,” she says.

“I get several newsletters that aggregate articles for my industry and business interests,” says Mann. She’s selective, only reading newsletters that she’s elected to receive, a handful of print and online publications — Sunday New York Times, Fast Company and Fortune — plus podcasts and articles recommended by trusted friends. “I find that influencers matter less to me, except of course for my good friends. When they recommend, that is meaningful to me.” ■

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