

# How to Get Media Coverage for Your Event



Presented by

**Barbara Lewis**

**Centurion Consulting Group**

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Hosted by Infopeople

# Barbara Lewis

- Over two decades in Marketing
- MBA from UCLA Anderson & Lecturer
- Started career as journalist – WSJ
- On-camera television reporter
- Literacy organization volunteer
- Book author

**Get a Black Belt in  
Marketing: The  
Marketing Success Book**

# What We'll Cover Today

- Survey results
- Types of articles and interviews
- Perfect pitch
- Press releases
- Do's and Don'ts of dealing with reporters
- Ideas for attracting the media
- Case studies
- Questions

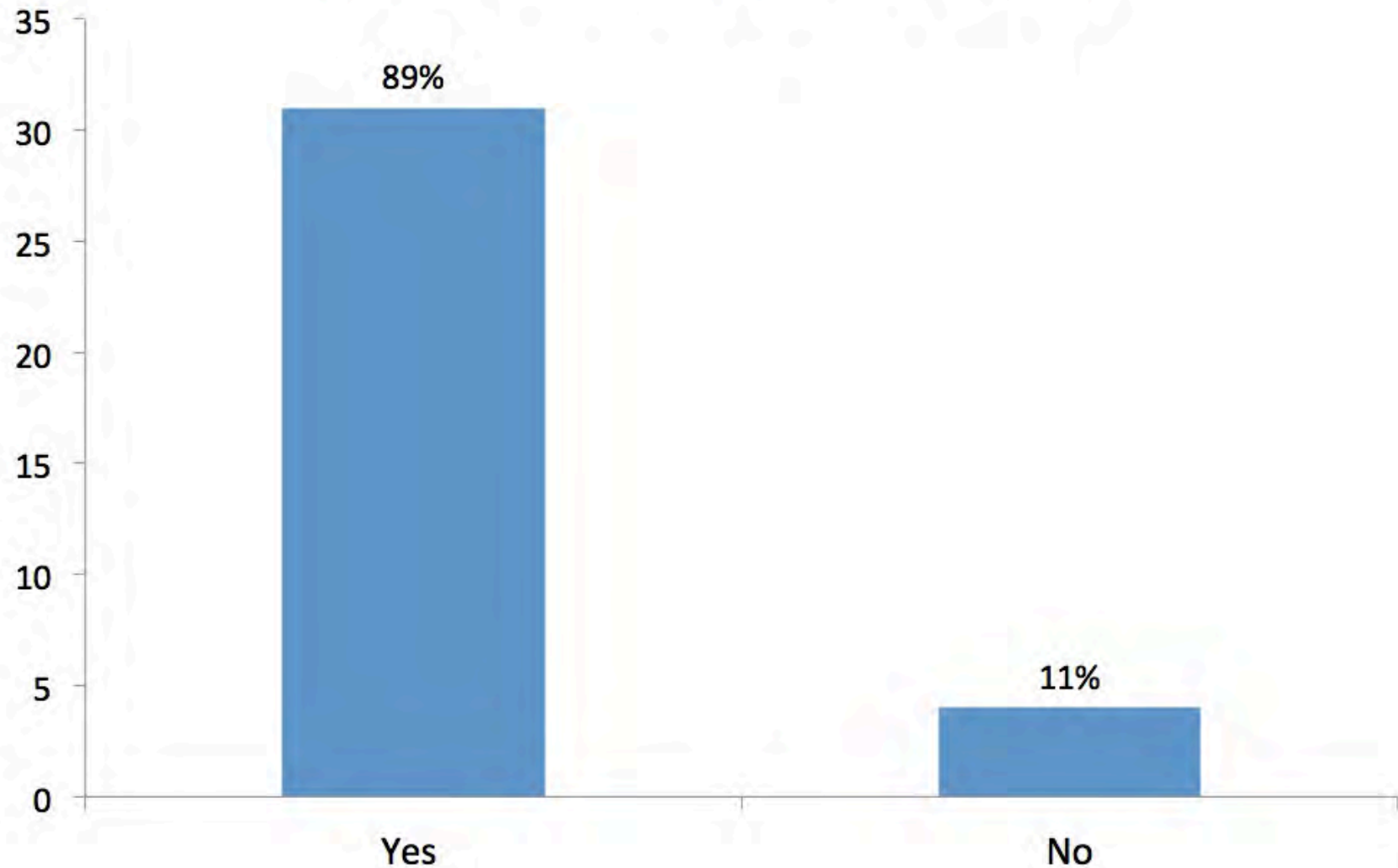


Use Literacy as Example

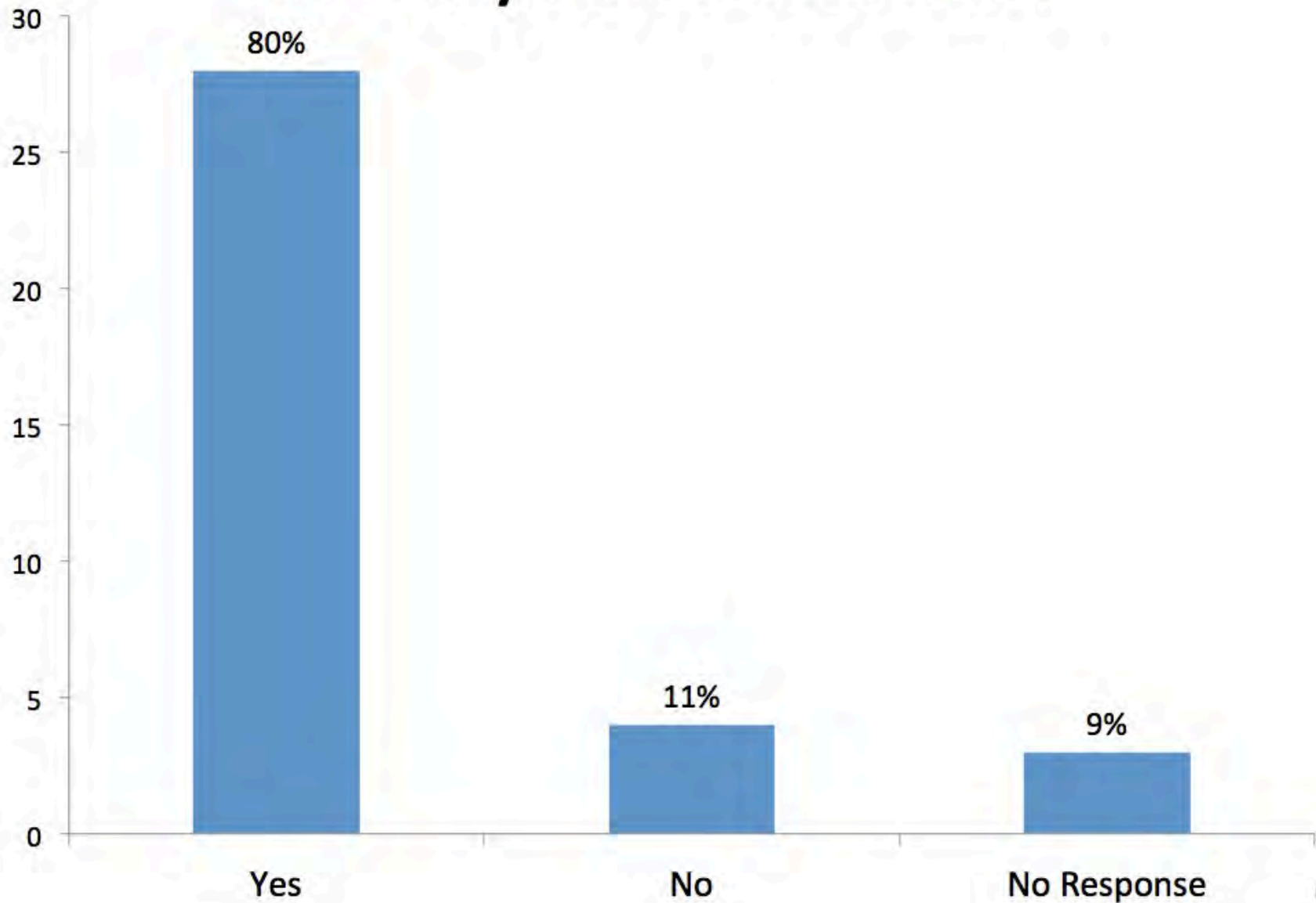
# Survey

- January 15<sup>th</sup> Carla Lehn emailed survey
- 12 questions
- Distributed to >100 people
- 36 responses; ~35%.

# Have you ever attempted to get media coverage for your library?

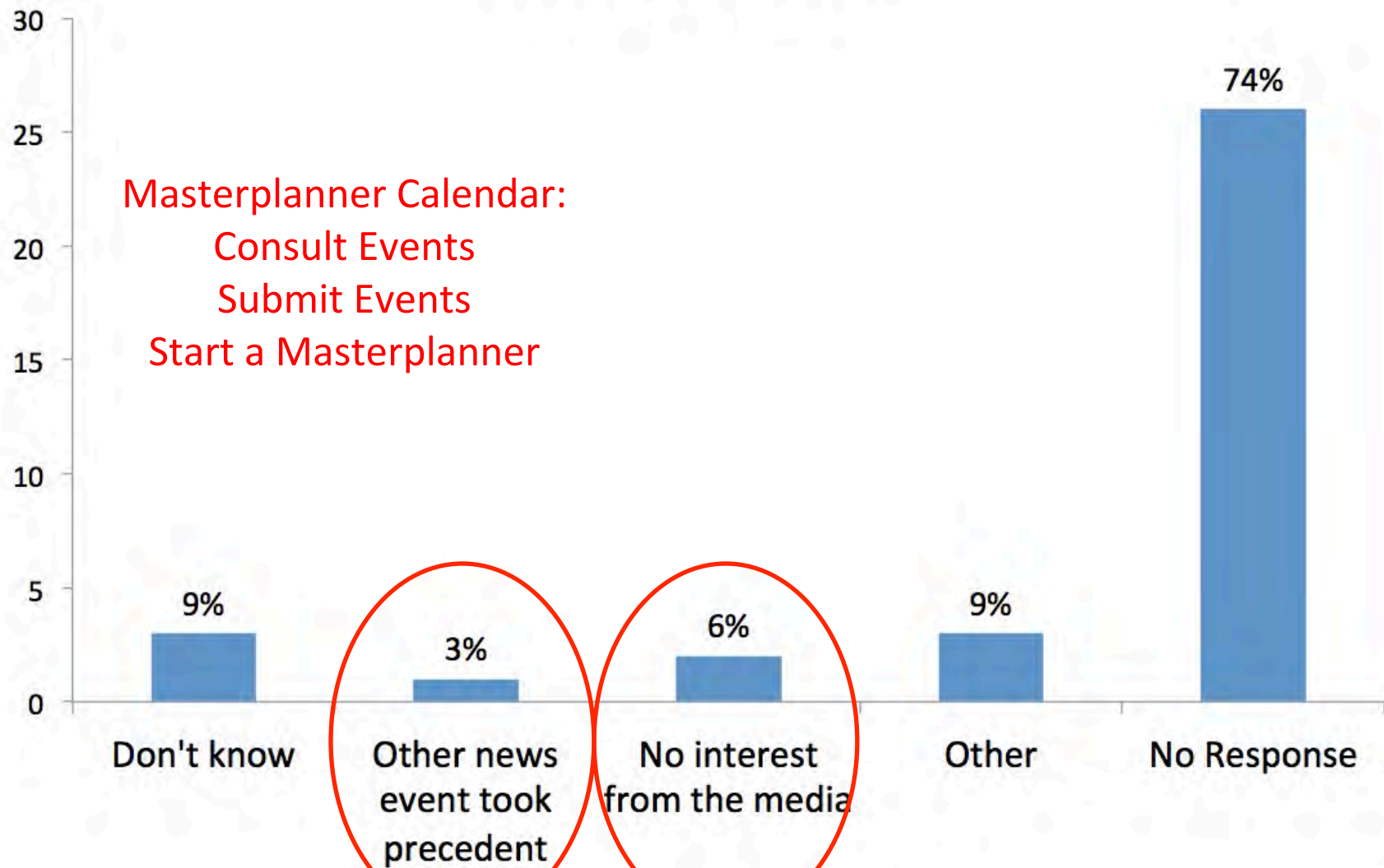


# Were you successful?



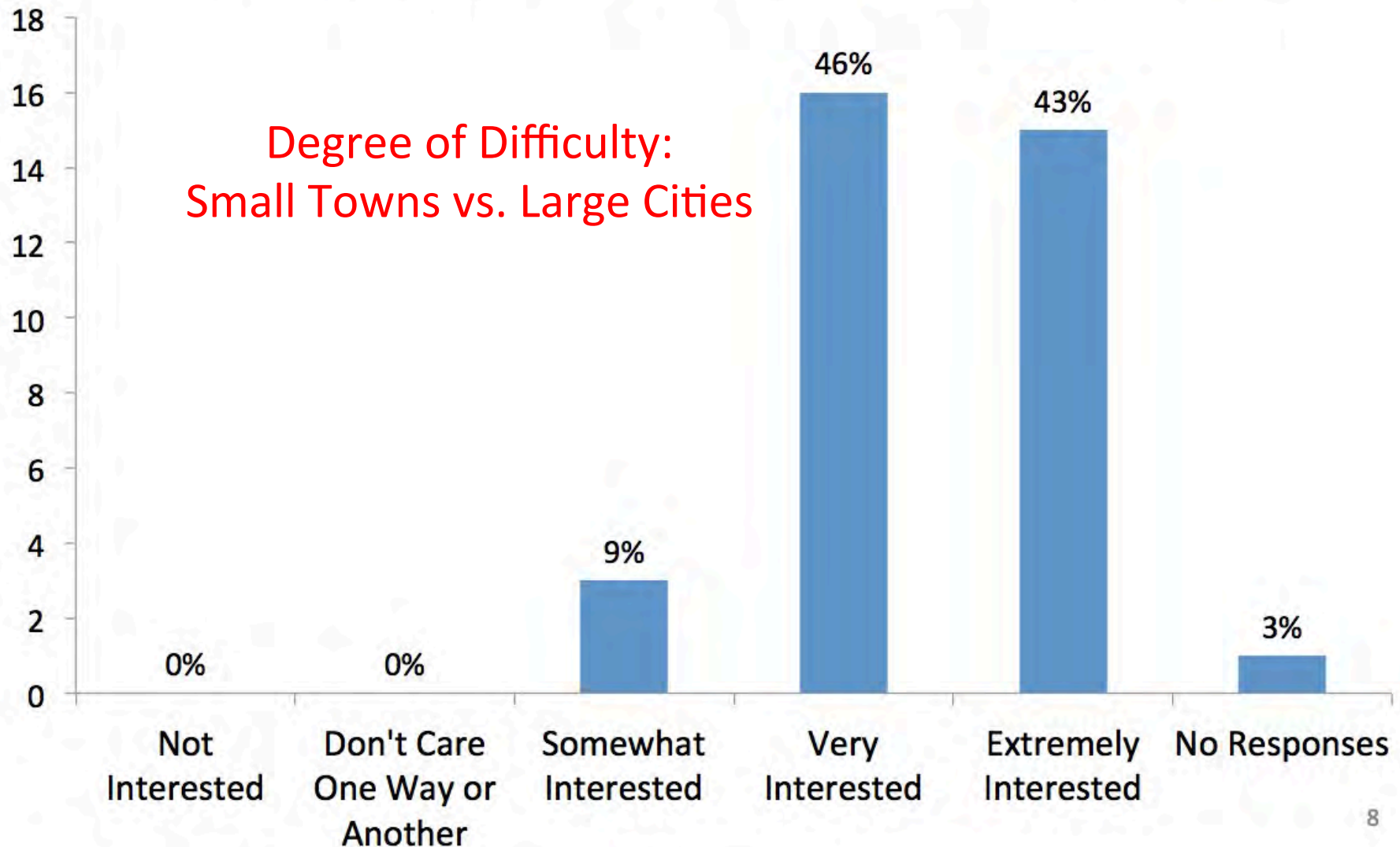
# Why not?

Masterplanner Calendar:  
Consult Events  
Submit Events  
Start a Masterplanner



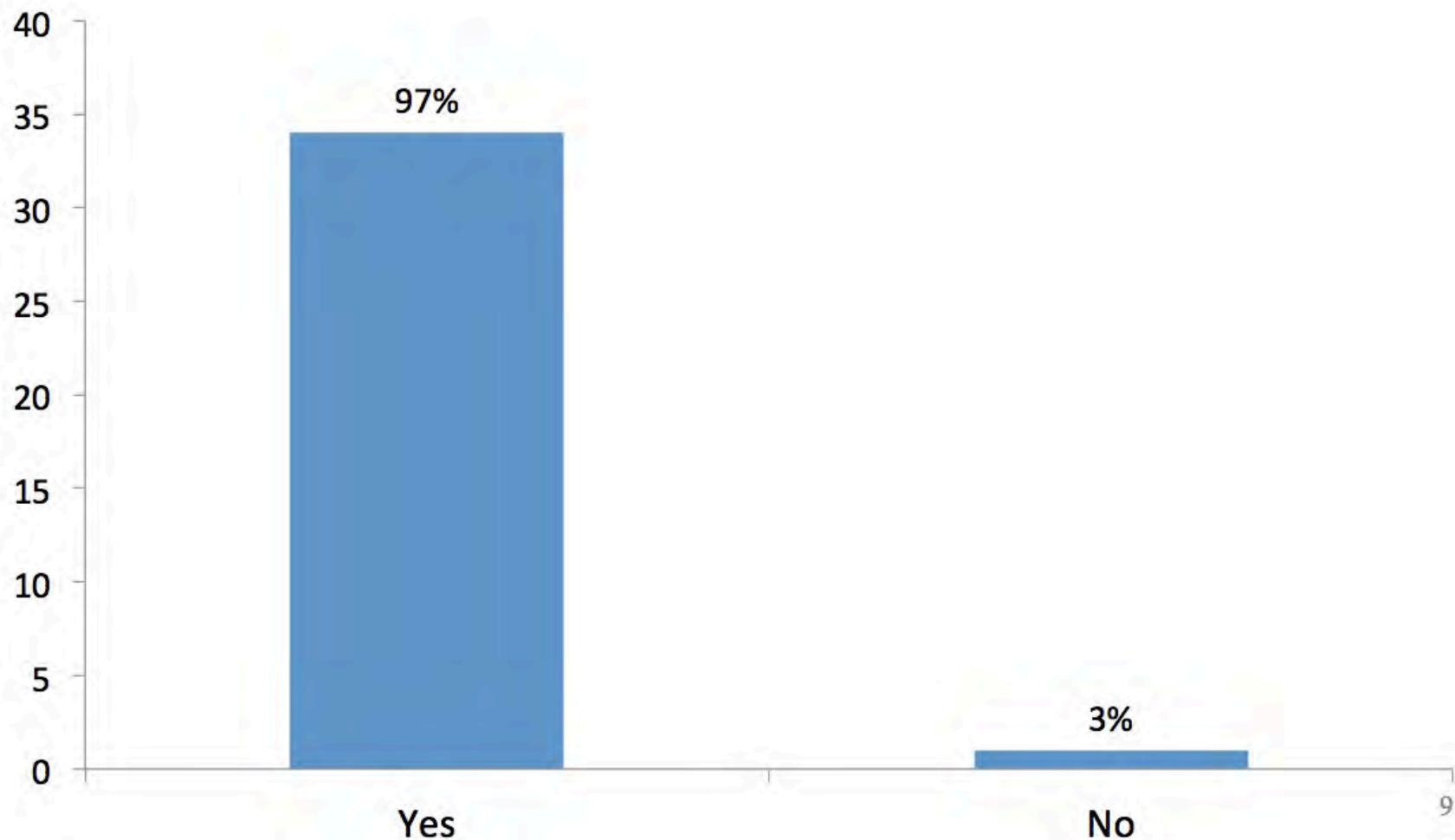
# How interested are you in getting media coverage for your library?

Degree of Difficulty:  
Small Towns vs. Large Cities

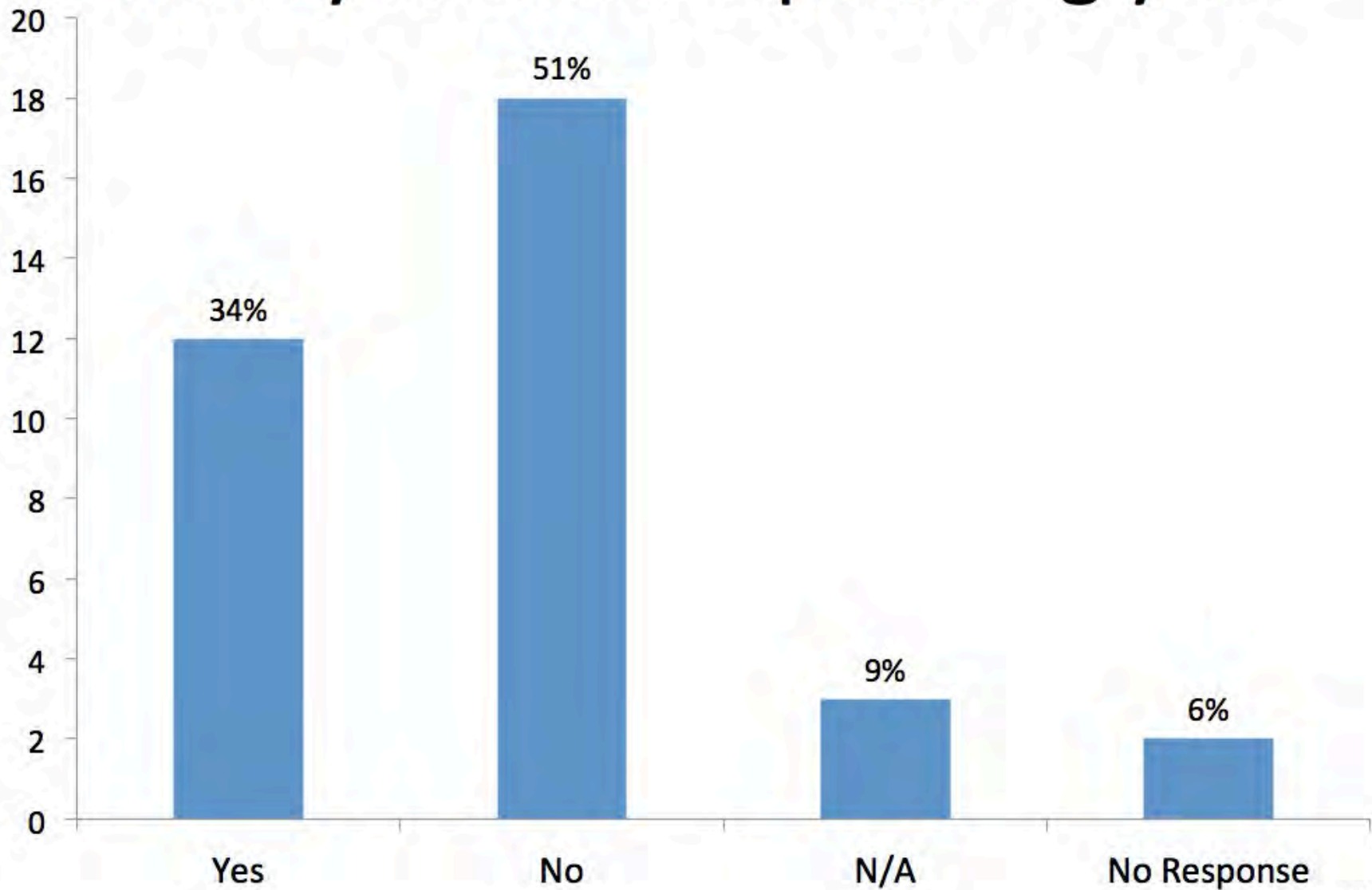




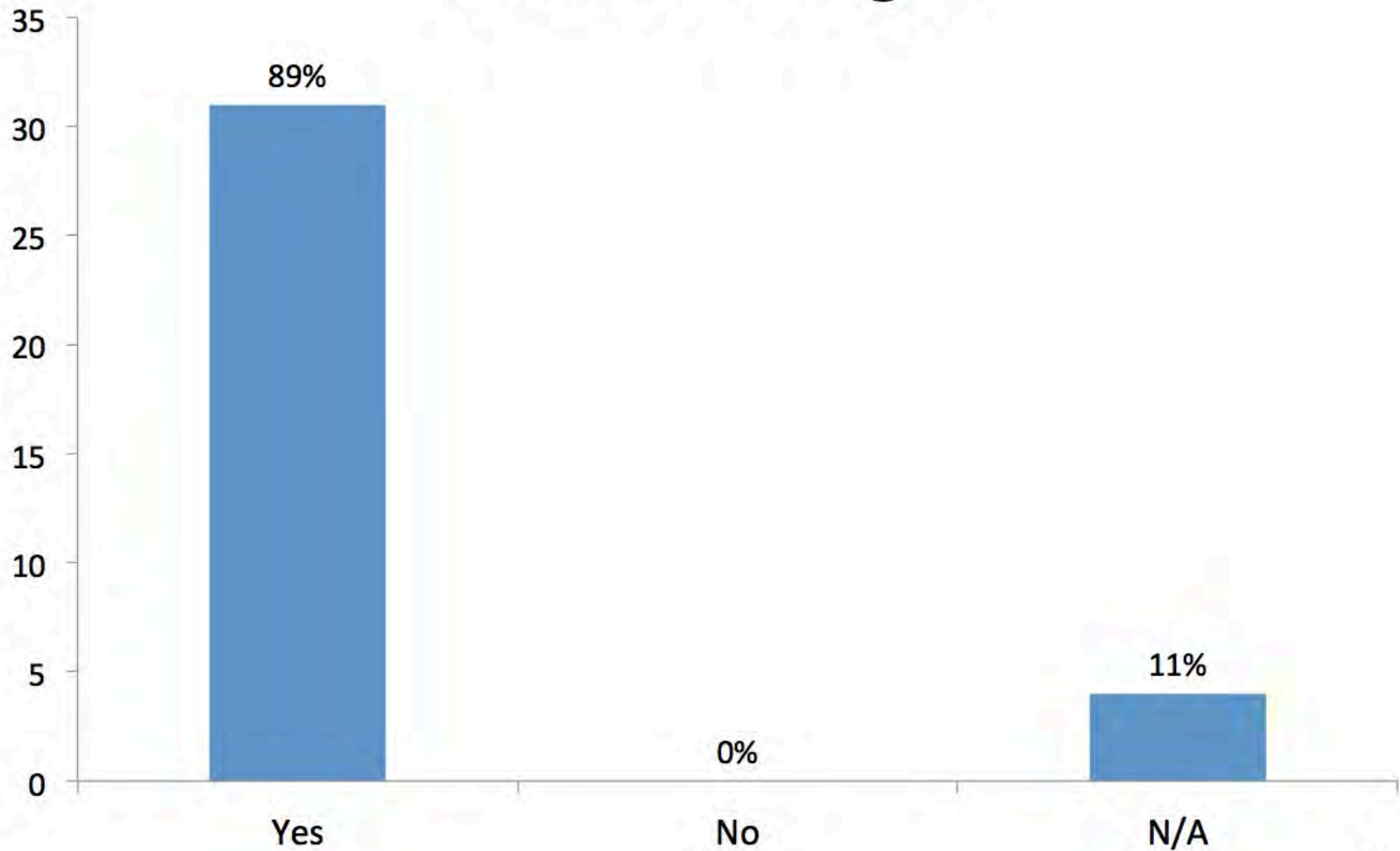
Are you planning to host an event to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the Adult Literacy Program in September?



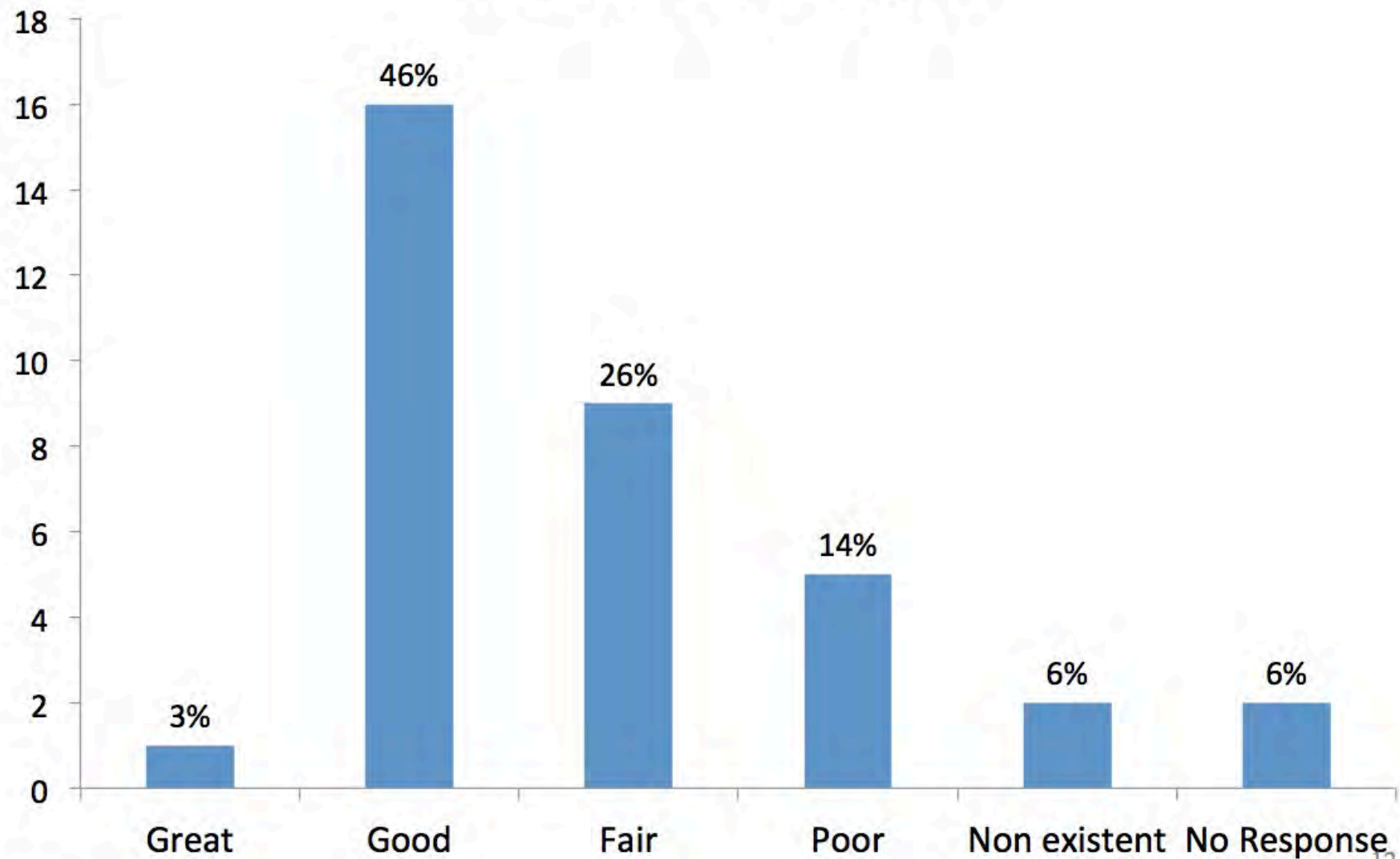
# Have you started planning yet?



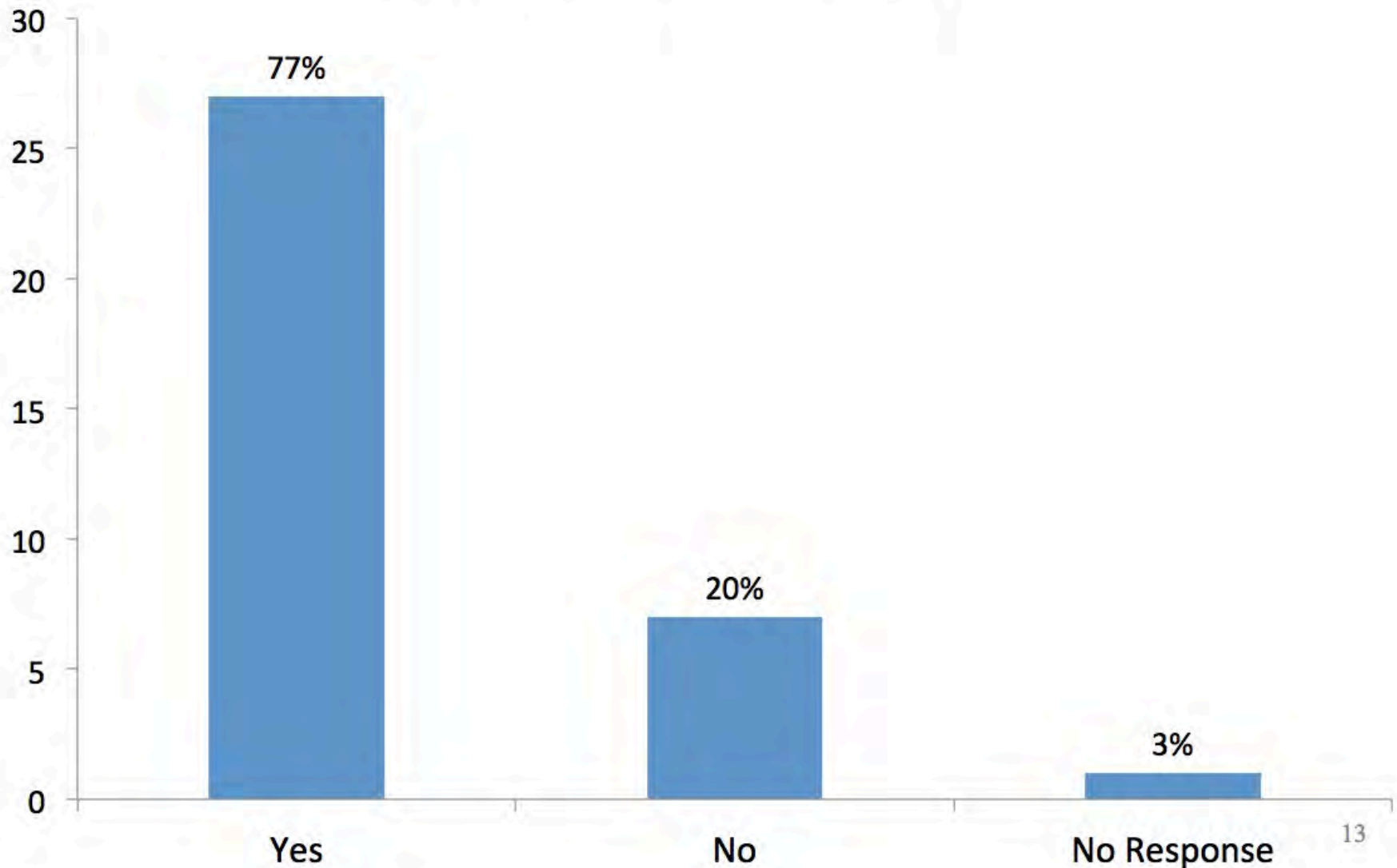
# Would you like your event to include media coverage?



# How would you rate your skills in getting media coverage?

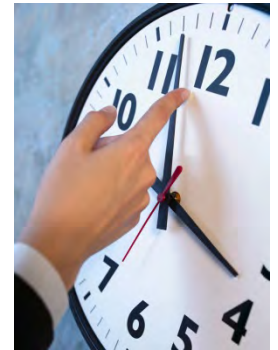


# Do you have relationships with any media in your community?

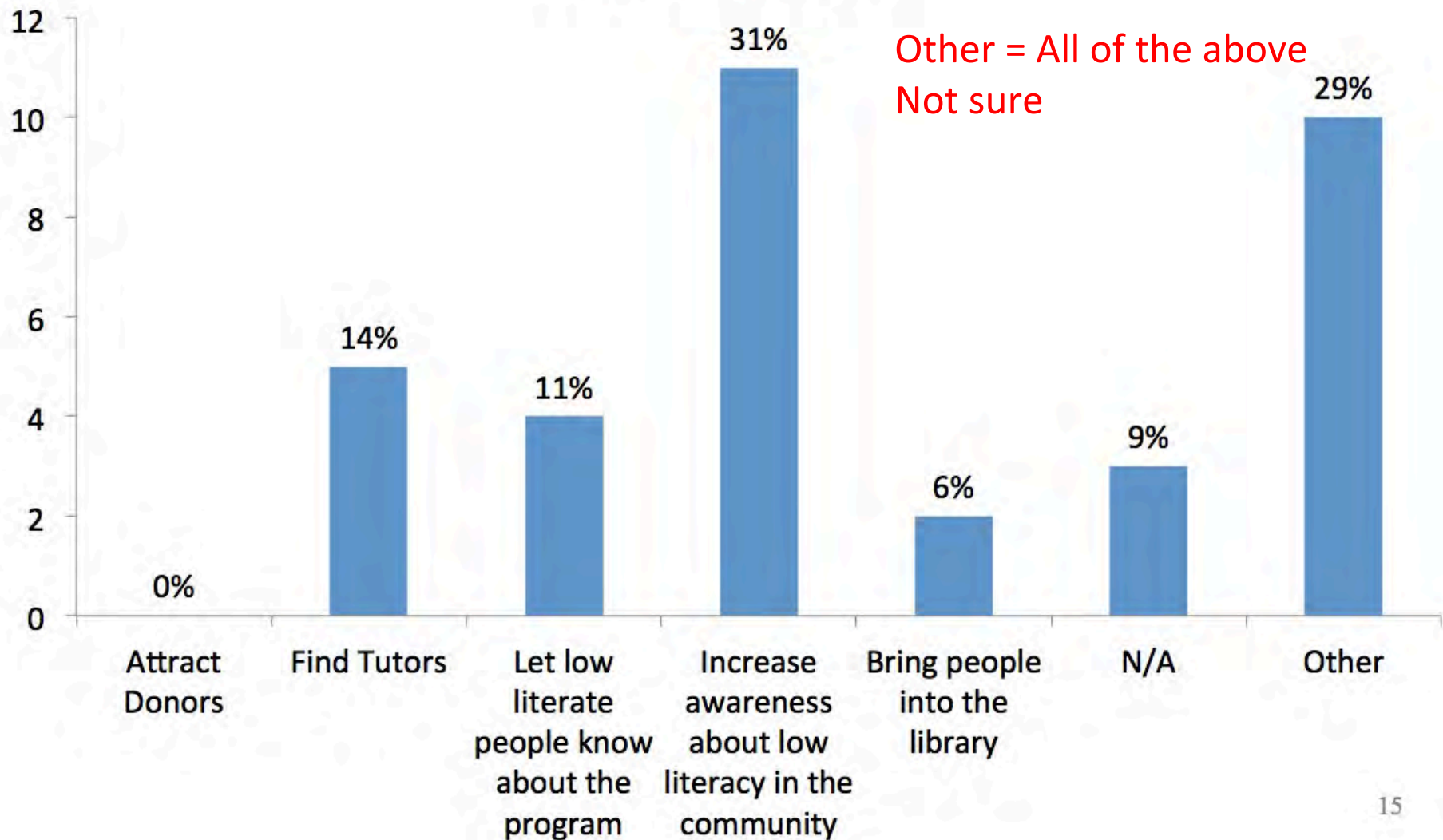


# What is your biggest barrier, fear or concern with dealing with the media?

- Time
- Getting responses to emails or voicemails
- Inexperience with creating YouTube videos
- The difference between what you want and what media prints
- Making mistakes in presenting the program in the best light
- Differences between coverage pre-, during-, and post- event for each media outlet (radio, television, print, Patches, etc.)



# What is your goal for media coverage for the 30th Anniversary of the Adult Literacy Program in September?





# Media Coverage: What is the Goal?

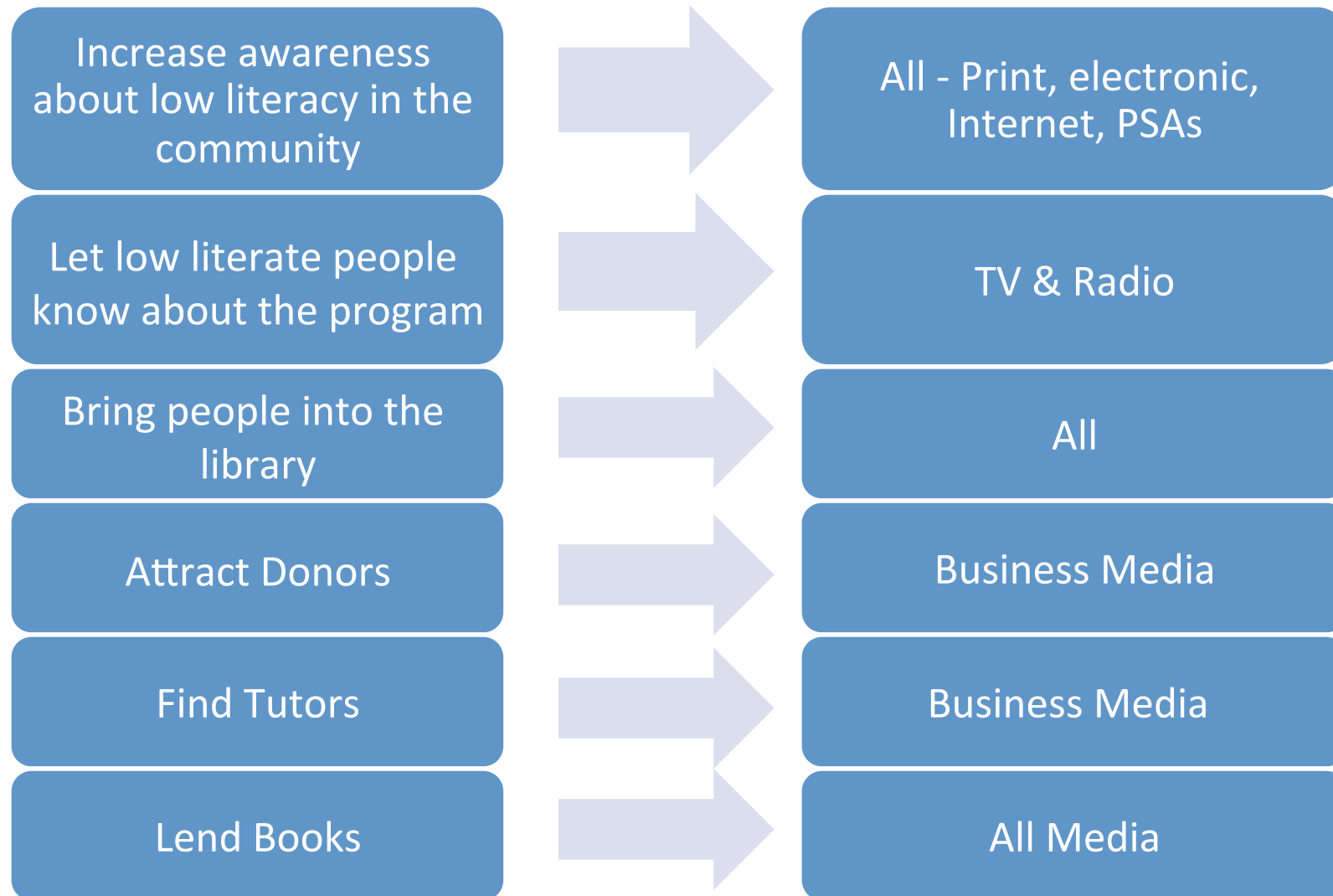
- Increase awareness about low literacy in the community
- Let low literate people know about the program
- Bring people into the library
- Attract donors
- Find tutors
- Lend books



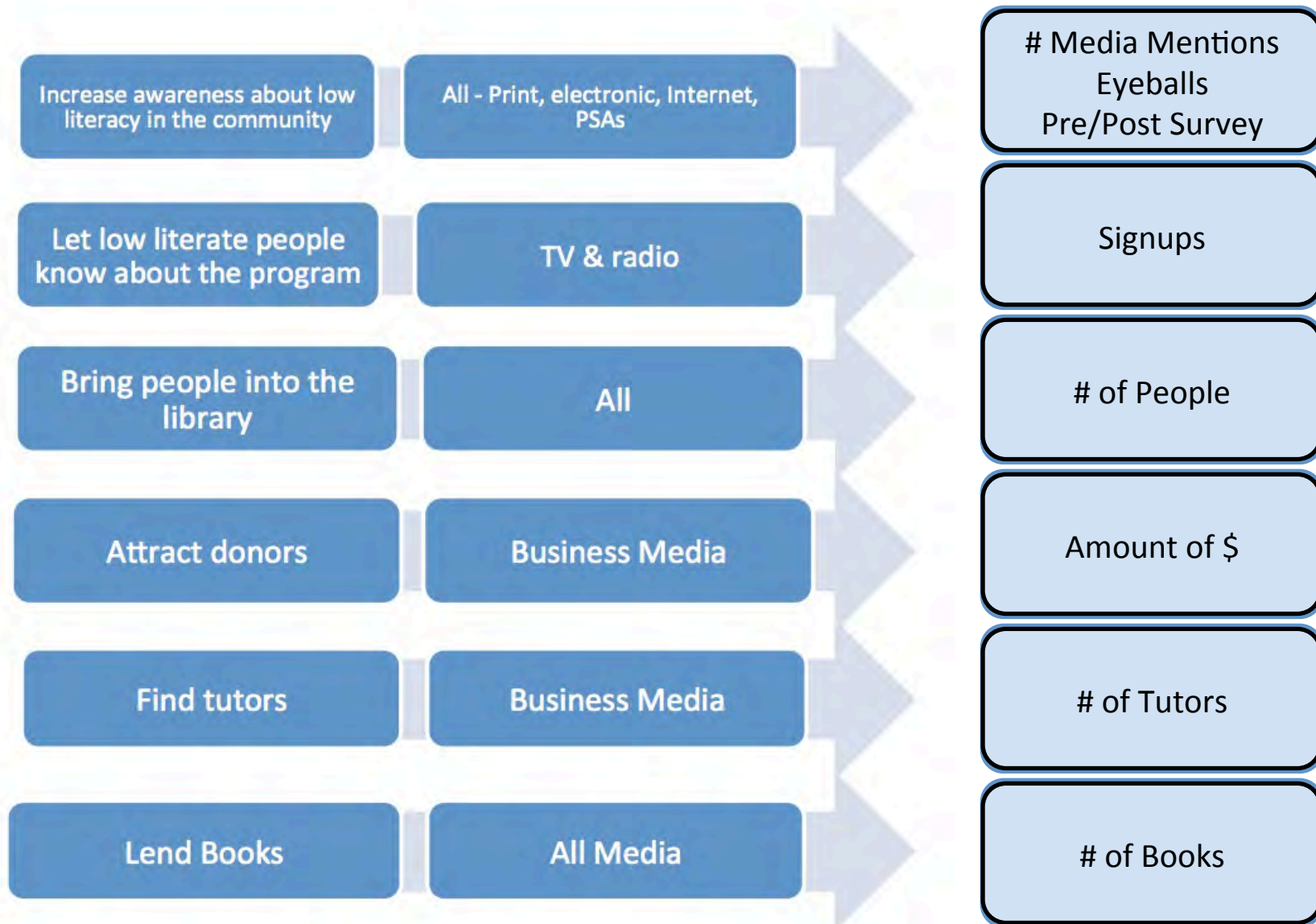
Your Primary Goal Drives the Media Plan



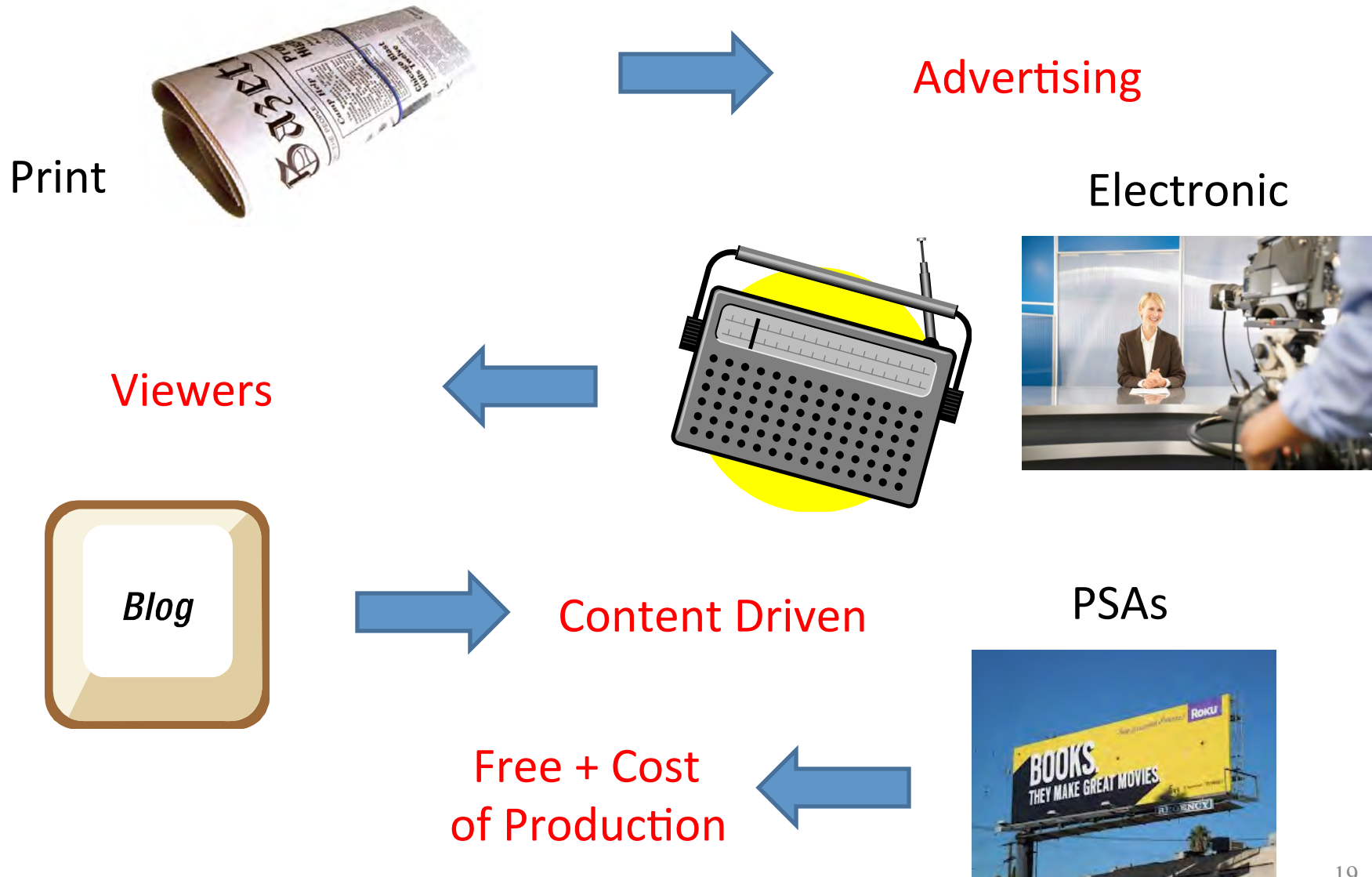
# Your Primary Goal Drives the Media Plan



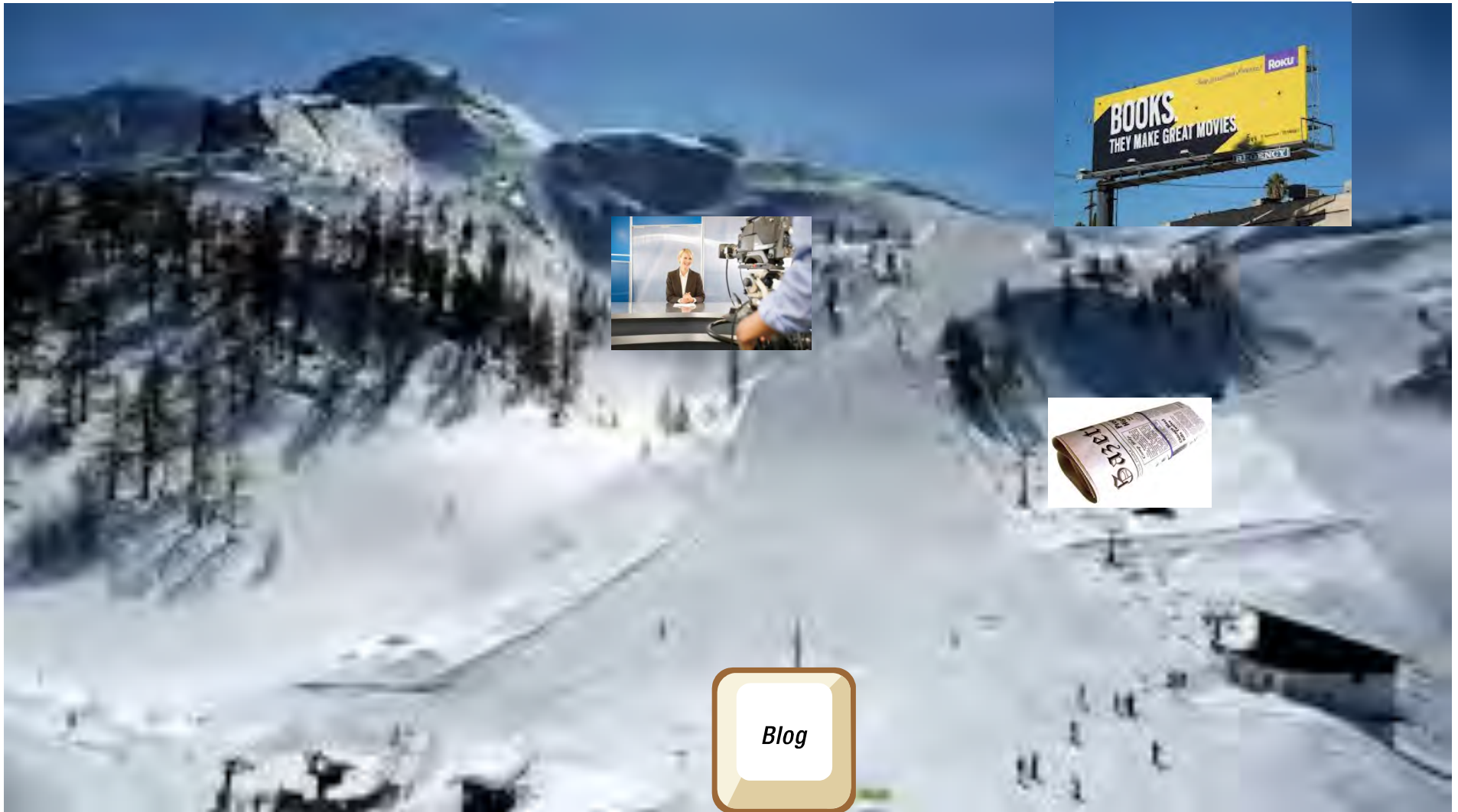
# How Do You Measure Your Success?



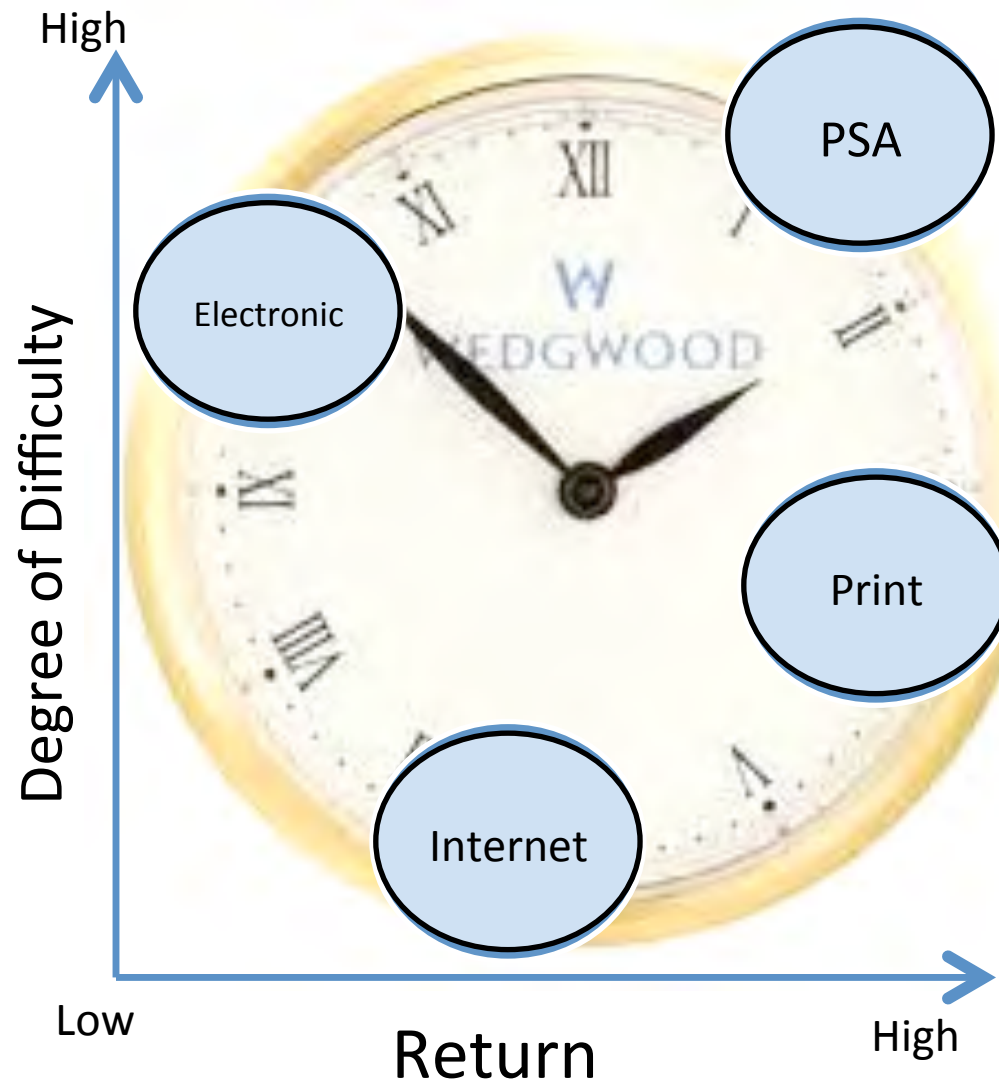
# Economics of the Media



# Degree of Difficulty in Getting Coverage



# Return You Get for Your Time Spent: Degree of Difficulty/Return



# Musical Chairs may be the Reporter's Career

- Begin at small media
- Work up to prestigious media
- **Your Job: Make friends with all of the reporters**
- Reporter's Job: Pursue the Pulitzer Prize, win recognition.



# Why Deal with Reporters?

- Enhance profile
- Squash bad publicity
- Accomplish goals
- Leverage press.



# Two Types of Articles

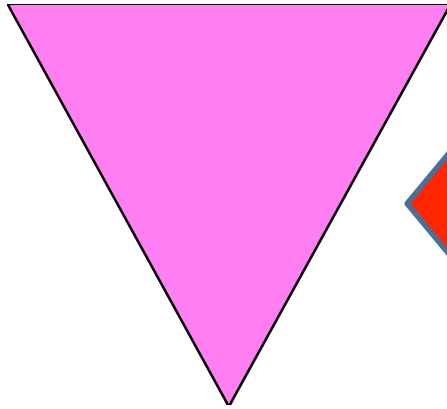
- Interview
  - You are use as source in an article
- By-lined
  - Written by you
    - Article
    - Letter to the editor
    - Op ed piece
    - Column
  - Not as effective.



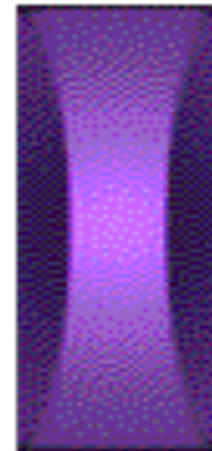


# News vs. Feature

- Most important details first
  - Editing is from bottom up
- Important details are throughout
  - Editing is throughout



If you are quoted at the bottom of a news article, you may be cut



# Why Reporters Call

- Premise needs a source
  - Interrogatories - Who, What, Where, When, Why & How
- Accessible
- Timely return of call or request for information
- Quotable quotes.

# How Do You Get Media Coverage?

- Unsolicited Interview
  - Reporter is looking for a quote
  - Interviewee is a good source & credible
  - Interviewee is on the contact list
- Pitch Interview
  - Call is made to the reporter suggesting a story idea
  - Reporter goes to editor and looks good
  - Quotes pitch source.

# How to Pitch Successfully

- Develop your media goal
- Target audience
- Research “media kits”
- Decide on media
- Develop good idea with a good angle
  - e.g. trends, surveys
  - Personal story
- Create Problem, Solution, Benefit.

# Research Publication thru a Media Kit

- Rate card for advertisements
- Demographic information
- Sample publication
- Circulation/viewer information
- Editorial calendar.



# Selecting the Topic

- Identify a problem, trend or an issue where public is confused or ask questions
- Analyze topic for capability to accomplish your goals
- Research if topic has already been written on extensively
- Format as “Problem/Solution/Benefit.”

# Problem/Solution/Benefit

- Editors favor style
- Organizes article
- Each section is 2 to 3 sentences.

# Problem/Solution/Benefit Example

- Problem
  - Begin with a story – the “hook”
  - Persuade editor
  - Capture reader
- Solution
  - Explain how problem was solved
- Benefit
  - Describe advantage for story individual.

Personalized & Relatable  
School Bus Accidents  
747 Crashes



# Contact:

## Editor or Reporter?

- Can assign article to any reporter
- May not know which reporters are available or interested
- May ask you to write the article
- Champions article ideas
- May have an interest
- May be too busy to handle.



Research the reporters:  
Who writes what?  
Recruit volunteer to help

# Contact Editor or Reporter

- Pitch the idea
- Offer to send background information
- Agree to write the article if requested
- Inquire about number of words and deadline
- Ask for writer's guidelines
- Read publication for style, etc.
- Write the article after the go ahead.

# The Perfect Pitch (Part 1)

1. Include the time, date, where the event is or how much it costs and the name of the section where it might go.
2. Don't use Facebook or Twitter or some other form of social media as a way to let the media know about something.
3. Find out the best editor/reporter to send the information to. It's OK to send to more than one person if the event might be of interest to different people, but don't blanket the entire newsroom with emails. And once an editor/reporter is working with you, don't work with another editor/reporter from the same publication.
4. READ the publication you are pitching to. Does it cover events? Does it preview events? Those are two different kinds of stories. What section does this coverage go in? If you show that you know the publication, that really impresses editors.
5. Pitch as far ahead of time as you can. Even daily newspapers plan far ahead. Magazines plan months ahead.
6. Most editors/reporters prefer email pitches.

# The Perfect Pitch (Part 2)

7. Make people available to talk to - and not just a spokesperson or executive: speakers, celebrities, experts, directors, people affected by the event.
8. Allow photography. Most publications now are very visually oriented because most stories get published online or on a mobile device. Photos are very important.
9. In the pitch, focus on why a preview or coverage of the event fits that publication's particular audience.
10. Make the pitch as timely as possible: Find a news story peg for the event; mention a recent study or report; relate it to a current issue; relate it to a current popular book or movie.
11. Include information in the body of the email; don't send attachments. Companies worry about viruses, which often come from downloaded attachments.

# Article Content

- Adhere to editor's requests
  - It's harder to write a short article than a long one
- Write strong opening and closing
- Use examples
- Answer who, what, where, when, why and how
- Write for the readers
- Don't use sophisticated terminology.

# Sentence Structure

- Order as subject, verb, object
- Write in active voice not passive
  - The library was a participant in the adult literacy program for 30 year. (passive)
  - The library participated in the adult literacy program for 30 years. (active)
- Use phrases sparingly (short sentences)
- Use spell check and grammar check
- Use readability statistics.

# Readability Statistics

- Determines grade level of article
  - Most newspapers are 8 to 10
- Based on:
  - Number of syllables in a word
  - Number of words in a sentence
  - Number of sentences in a paragraph
- Enhances ease of reading
- Flesch or Flesch-Kincaid



MS 2010 File > Options > Proofing > Check Grammar w Spelling >  
Check Show Readability Statistics (check spelling to get to readability)

# Most Common Pitfalls in Writing

- Word length
- Technical jargon
- Passive sentences
- Phrases, phrases, phrases.





# Do's and Don'ts of Dealing with a Reporter

## (Part 1)

- Alert anyone who answers the phone, etc.
- Take the call immediately
- Prepare yourself by verbalizing
- Get name, publication, phone number, etc.
- Allow a reporter to tape record
- Answer question beginning with question
- Give more than yes/no answer
- Don't use technical jargon.

# Do's and Don'ts of Dealing with a Reporter (Part 2)

- Never talk “Off the record”
- Never say, “As I said before...”
- Use humor with caution
- Suggest reporter call with further questions
- Ask when article is to be published
- Offer to send additional information
- Never call a reporter and inquire about status.

# Leverage Media Coverage

- Put on your website
- Publish in e-newsletter
- Turn into speech for local organization
- Place on bulletin board
- Include in materials given to prospective partners.

# Case Study

- Issue – low reading scores in elementary schools
- Goal – raise money from businesses to buy more books
- Target – business people reading the business journal
- Problem – our future work force has low reading skills
- Solution – businesses should team with local elementary schools to supply books and tutors
- Benefit – businesses will have literate work force.

# Ideas to Attract Media for Literacy Month

## What Worked in the Past?

- Increase awareness about low literacy in the community
  - City Proclamation/Keys to the City
  - Celebrity spokesperson
- Let low literate people know about the program
  - Success story on electronic media
- Bring people into the library
  - Article in print media on success story and tutor
  - In-library events, such as career counseling, resume creation, movie book afternoon, story days
- Find tutors
  - Profile of literacy tutor
  - Op ed in the business journal

**30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Toolkit –  
libraryliteracy.org**

# Questions or Comments or Ideas?



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