

# JOURNALIST STUDY

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Prepared for

Donald W. Reynolds National Center for Business Journalism

Prepared by

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## INTRODUCTION

This report was commissioned by the Donald W. Reynolds National Center for Business Journalism and conducted by Behavior Research Center (BRC). The purpose of the study was to measure issues related to coverage of privately-held and minority-owned businesses.

The information contained in this report is based on 125 in-depth interviews with business journalists throughout the United States. All interviewing was conducted in February 2008, by executive interviewers at BRC's state-of-the-art Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) facility in Phoenix. Interviewing was conducted under the direct supervision of BRC supervisory personnel who randomly monitor interviews as they are conducted and who validate completed interviews. Prior to beginning the interviews, all interviewers were trained in all aspects of this job, including protocols for open-ended questions and sampling techniques.

When reviewing the results from this survey, it should be kept in mind that all surveys are subject to sampling error. Sampling error, simply stated, is the difference between the results obtained from a sample and those that would be obtained by surveying the entire universe under consideration. The overall sampling error for this survey is approximately +/-8.7 percent at a 95 percent confidence interval.

Behavior Research Center has presented all of the data germane to the basic research purposes of this project. However, if Reynolds Center management requires additional data retrieval or interpretation, we stand ready to provide such input.

**BEHAVIOR RESEARCH CENTER**

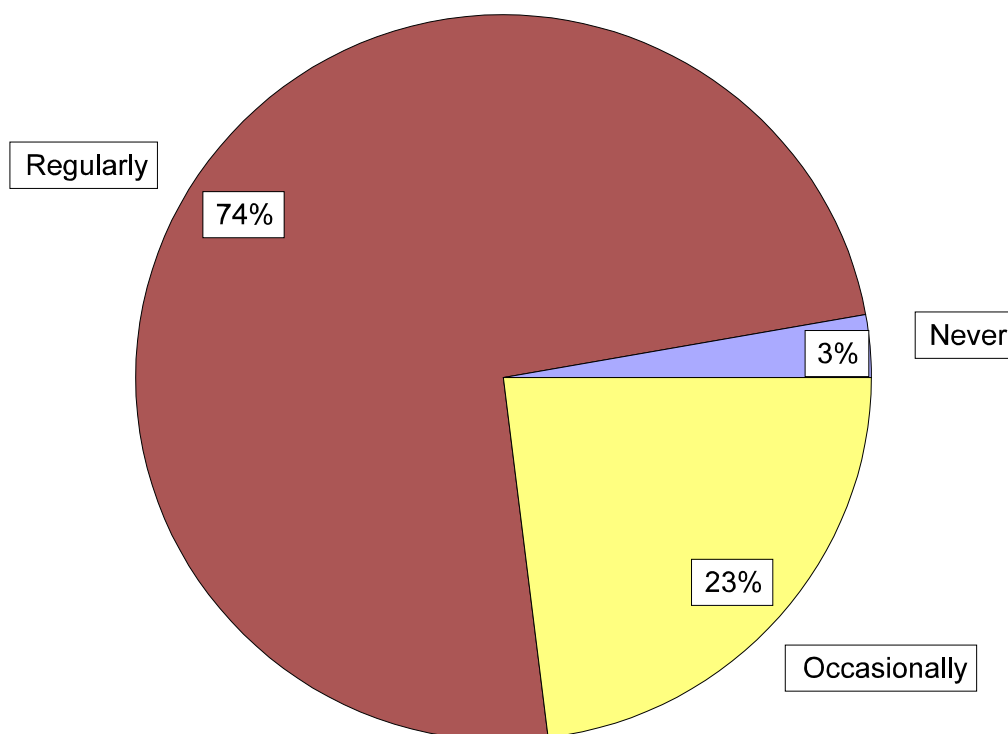
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## STUDY FINDINGS

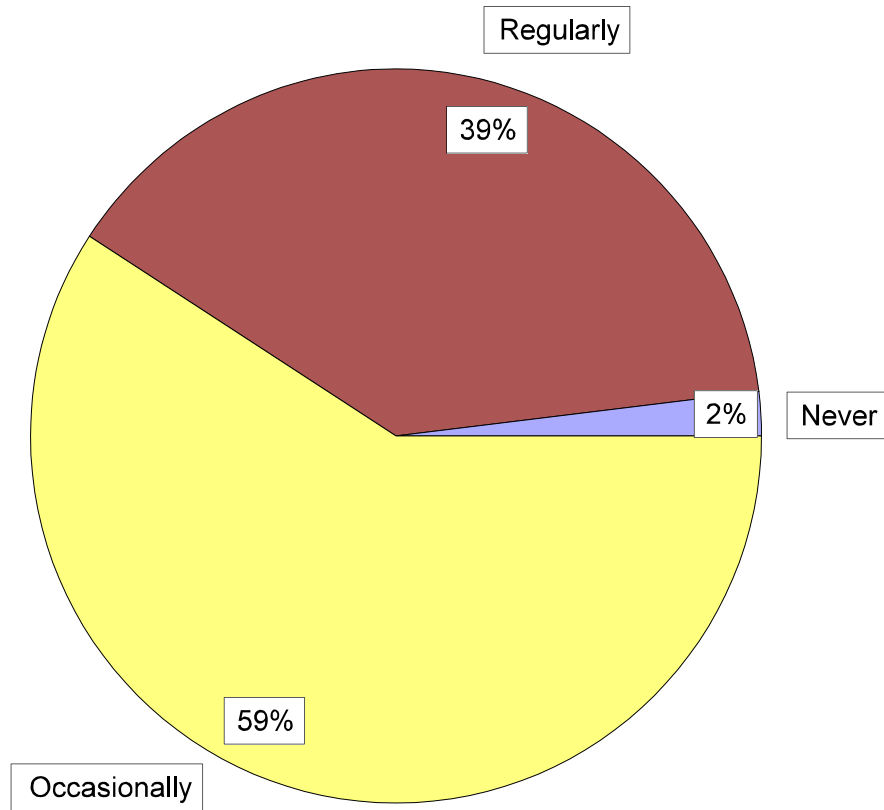
### COVERAGE OF INDEPENDENT AND MINORITY-OWNED BUSINESSES

Three-fourths (74%) of respondents regularly cover private, independent businesses, while four in ten (39%) regularly cover minority-owned businesses. Almost all respondents cover independent and minority business at least occasionally.

*“As a business journalist, do you regularly, occasionally or never cover private, independent businesses?”*



*“And do you regularly, occasionally or never cover minority-owned businesses?”*



## AMOUNT OF COVERAGE DEVOTED TO PRIVATELY-HELD COMPANIES

Almost half (47%) report that 30 percent or more of their company's total business coverage involves privately-held businesses. Predictably, those whose coverage area is local report more coverage of such businesses.

*"In a typical week, about what percentage of your company's total business coverage involves privately-held companies?"* (DO NOT READ CATEGORIES)

	Under 5%	5% to 10%	11% to 20%	21% to 30%	30% +	Not Sure
Total	5%	9%	7%	8%	47%	24%
<u>GENDER</u>						
Male	6	9	8	8	44	25
Female	2	8	5	8	54	23
<u>COVERAGE AREA</u>						
Local	3	10	2	5	52	28
Regional	0	7	13	16	45	19
National	30	10	20	10	20	10
<u>ETHNICITY</u>						
Caucasian	5	7	7	9	50	22
Minority	7	20	0	7	33	33
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Three-fourths (75%) expect their coverage of privately-held businesses to remain about the same in the next year, while 15 percent expect the amount of coverage to increase.

*“Do you expect your company to increase, decrease or keep about the same amount of coverage of private businesses in the coming 12 months?”*

	Increase	Decrease	Keep the Same	Not Sure
Total	15%	4%	75%	6%
<u>GENDER</u>				
Male	15	4	74	7
Female	13	5	77	5
<u>COVERAGE AREA</u>				
Local	13	6	72	9
Regional	16	0	84	0
National	10	0	80	10
<u>ETHNICITY</u>				
Caucasian	16	3	76	5
Minority	7	13	67	13
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Fully 26 percent foresee their coverage of minority-owned businesses increasing in the next year, while just two percent expect a decrease in such coverage.

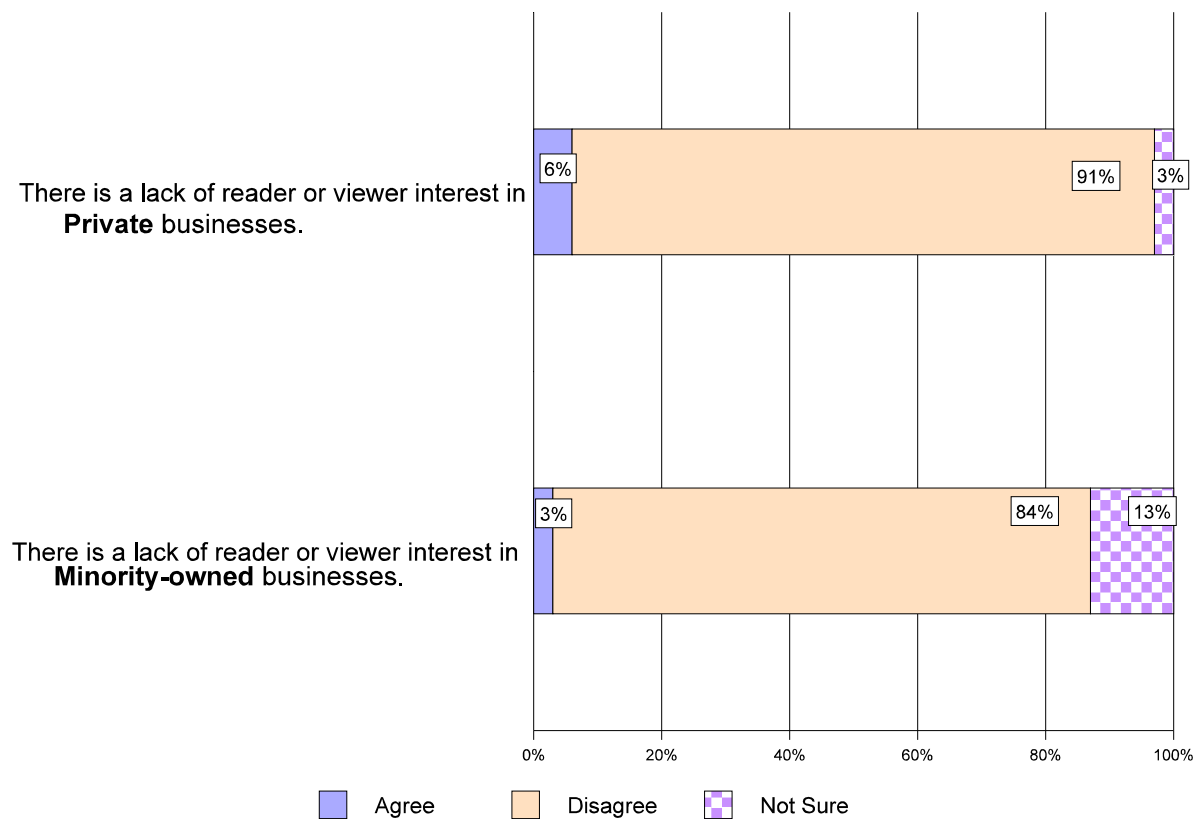
*“Do you expect your company to increase, decrease or keep about the same amount of coverage of minority-owned businesses in the coming 12 months?”*

	Increase	Decrease	Keep the Same	Not Sure
Total	26%	2%	66%	6%
<u>GENDER</u>				
Male	24	2	66	8
Female	31	3	64	2
<u>COVERAGE AREA</u>				
Local	29	4	59	8
Regional	19	0	81	0
National	20	0	70	10
<u>ETHNICITY</u>				
Caucasian	24	3	67	6
Minority	40	0	53	7

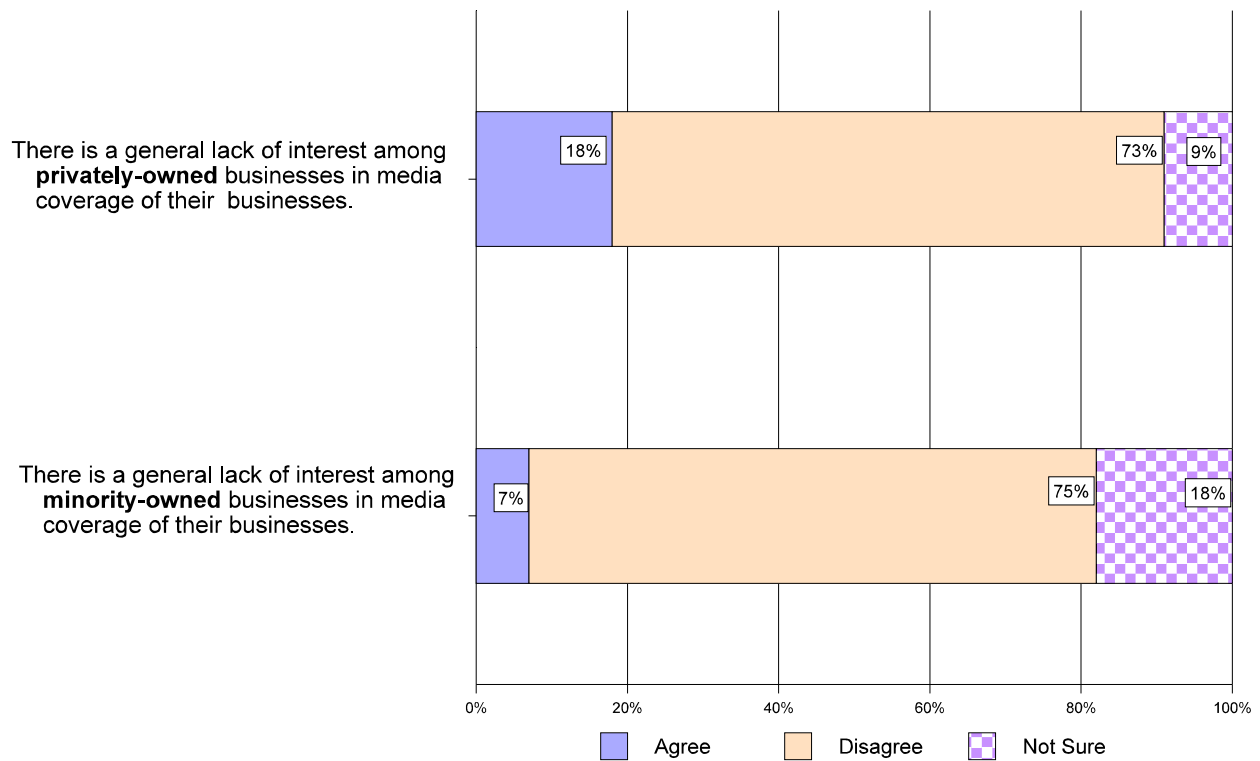
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## INTEREST IN COVERAGE OF PRIVATE AND MINORITY BUSINESSES

As the graphic below demonstrates, journalists almost universally disagree that there is a lack of reader or viewer interest in news about either privately-held businesses or about minority-owned businesses.

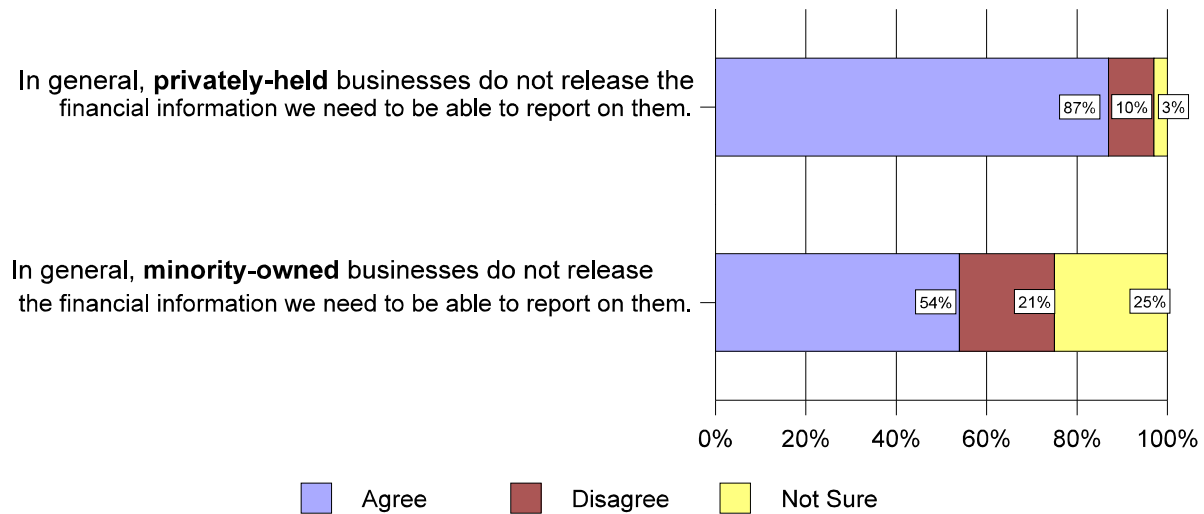


Likewise, journalists disagree that there is a lack of interest on the part of private and minority business owners in coverage of their businesses.



## AVAILABILITY OF FINANCIAL INFORMATION

A barrier to more coverage of privately-held companies may be seen in the graphic below. Almost nine in ten (87%) journalists feel that privately-held businesses withhold the financial information they need to be able to report on them. In general, journalists appear to feel that minority business owners are somewhat more forthcoming with financial information than are non-minority private companies.



## PERCEIVED DISTRUST OF THE MEDIA BY BUSINESS OWNERS

Journalists are divided on the issue of trust of the media by business owners. Again, they seem to feel that minority business owners are a bit more trusting than are non-minority business owners.

