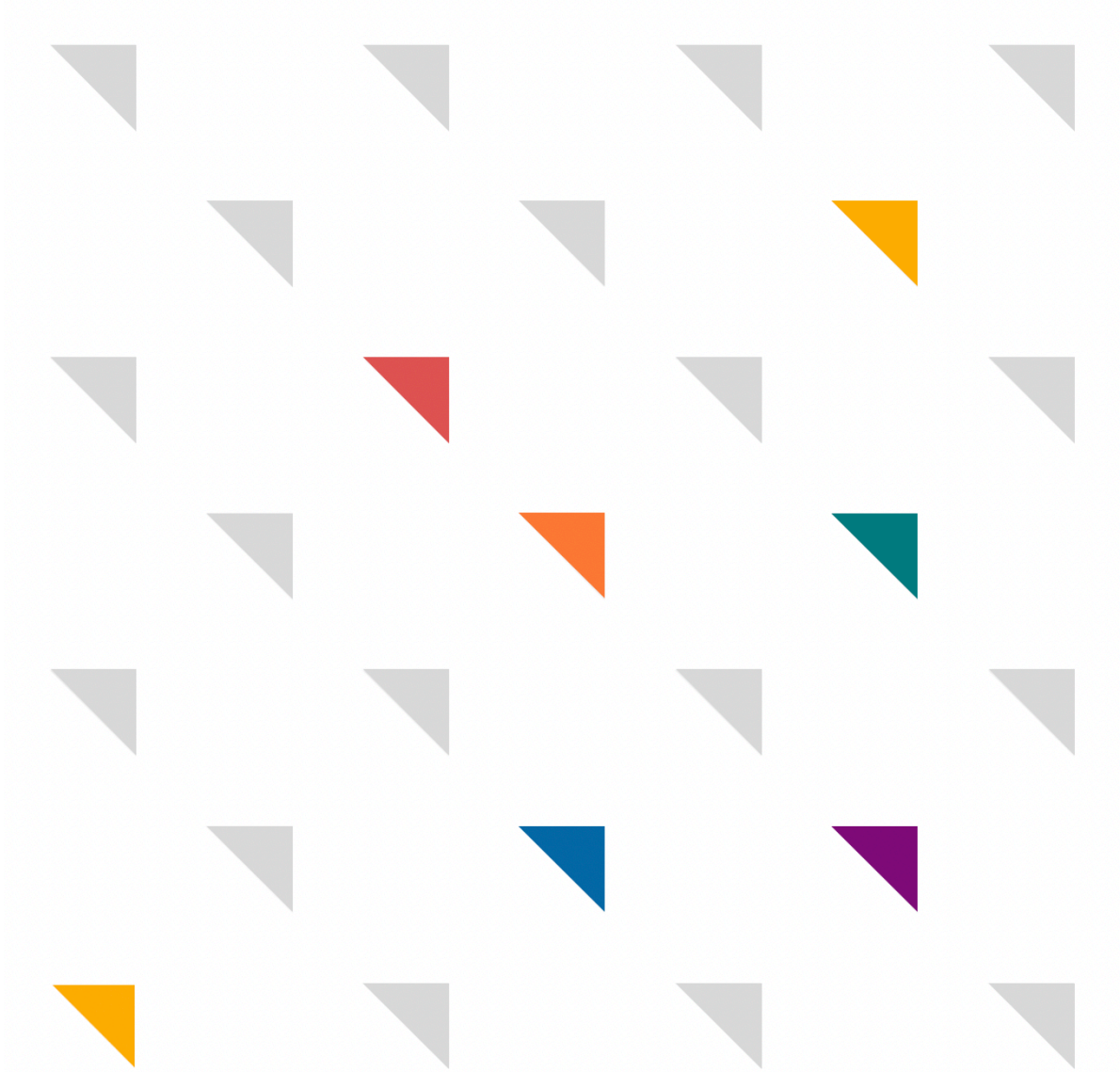


The State of Startups with Industry Analysts Report 2022

Findings

A research project done in conjunction with the University of Edinburgh Business School

Professor Neil Pollock, Robin Schaffer and Chris Holscher

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1. INTRODUCTION

The State of Startups with Industry Analysts (SSIA) report was initiated to understand better how startups and scaleups in the business-to-business (b2b) technology space are interacting with industry analysts such as Gartner, Forrester and IDC and hundreds of smaller firms.

Large established vendors often have dedicated analyst relations teams to run sophisticated programmes using the insights and influence of industry analysts.

Earlier research has consistently shown industry analysts among the top three impacting factors to buyers' strategy and purchasing decisions.

Expert observations of startups who use the impact of industry analysts have shown faster development and greater market success than those who don't.

Previous startup research found that the typical 50 per cent death-rate of startups after four years in business improved to an 84 per cent survival rate for those highlighted in top analyst publications such as the Gartner Cool Vendor report.

Such data suggest that industry analyst relations should be a key discipline for startups. And indeed, top-tier venture capital firms like Andreessen Horowitz[1], Sapphire Ventures[2] or Sierra Ventures[3] have written about the strategic importance of industry analyst engagement.

Yet, looking broadly at startup events and publications, the topic is rarely mentioned. Is it a best-hidden secret? Or a blind spot? Or both? In any case, there appears to be a gap between b2b technology startups, their ecosystem and industry analysts.

Industry analyst relations expert and startup specialist Chris Holscher initiated the examination of the topic in depth together with fellow AR expert Robin Schaffer and in partnership with the University of Edinburgh Business School.

The University of Edinburgh is known among analyst relations practitioners for its Analyst Observatory research programme, led by Professor Neil Pollock. The SSIA research project was launched as part of this programme in late 2021.

1 https://a16z.com/2017/02/01/analyst-relations-for-startups/

2 https://sapphireventures.com/blog/5-insights-startup-cmos-should-know-about-analyst-relations/

3 https://www.sierraventures.com/blog/effective-analyst-relations-for-startups-10-top-principles/

1.1. Concept of the report

The main goal of the ongoing SSIA project is to gather information about the state of play between the three stakeholder groups (industry analysts, startups and their ecosystem of investors and accelerators) in terms of their motivations, practices, value perceptions and future plans.

The second goal is to derive strategic and actionable insights to help these stakeholders close the gap.

The research was set up as three separate online surveys, each dedicated to one stakeholder group. Each survey's questions were tailored to the different group's perspectives.

Participants were encouraged to provide additional comments throughout the survey. The research team conducted follow-ups with select participants.

Participants were accepted from all geographies.

Qualified startups were under ten years in business and from b2b technology and services sectors.

1.2. Data set

The SSIA survey gathered nearly 500 written responses between September 2021 and June 2022.

More than two-thirds of respondents provided additional comments, many of which included comprehensive explanations and examples.

40% of respondents are headquartered in Europe and 40% in North America. 15% come from Asia and 5% from the Middle East region.

60% of respondents were industry analysts, 35% were startups, and 5% ecosystem of venture capital firms and accelerators, representing another 2,000 startups.

Since the ecosystem version of the SSIA survey had less than 100 responses, we did not include their perspective in the data set but used it only as indicative information (e.g. in the question about future plans).

The data set was cleared from duplicate and fake entries as well as entries to the wrong version of the survey.

All financial data is given in USD, which at the time of the research and publication is about 1:1 equivalent to EUR.

1.3. Base understanding of analyst relations

This document will abbreviate "Industry Analyst Relations" with "AR", as it has been used for decades. The research builds on the following commonly accepted truths:

- **The industry analyst business model guarantees impartiality by design**, providing the basis for their unique role and value perception in the market. Analyst firms have strict policies and control mechanisms, ensuring ethical behaviour. If an analyst firm breaks this impartiality, its credibility and brand value will dissolve, and market perception will shift away.
- **Industry analysts are paid by buyers** to help them understand and sort through market offerings, avoid being swayed by exaggerations in vendor sales and marketing, and make well-informed strategy and purchasing decisions. Industry analysts especially help buyers to make sense of emerging technology.
- **Industry analysts are paid by technology and services vendors** for reliable market data and trustworthy observations about buyer behaviour and technological trends. Industry analysts help vendors with innovation and product development, business strategy, go-to-market, messaging, etc.
- **Analyst briefings are always free** for the vendor to provide, assuming the vendor's information is relevant to the analyst's research agenda.
- **Gartner is the largest industry analyst firm, followed by Forrester and IDC.** Hundreds of tier-two firms specialise in select research areas, industries and geographies. Further, hundreds of independent analysts have often built an outstanding reputation in their fields of expertise.
- **An individual industry analyst has up to 2,000 interactions with vendors and buyers annually.** These are primarily briefings, inquiries and strategic advisory. This breadth and depth of insight can extend a vendor's own market perception substantially and thus guide, accelerate and secure decision making.
- **Industry analysts' recommendations and publications are consistently measured in the top three influential factors** in strategy and buying decisions, according to prior research.
- **B2B technology and services vendors invest substantial resources to manage industry analyst relations.** Activities are run by in-house teams and advised by or outsourced to external AR specialists and agencies.
- **The function of AR is not to be confused with public relations (PR)**. While PR is largely a one-way street, AR is a two-way relationship with an emphasis on getting insights into the business. Practices, processes, and the business model are substantially different, and it is essential to understand how both can amplify each other.[4]
- **If industry analysts are commissioned with custom research or thought leadership papers, the principle of impartiality requires every word to be in sync with their other research.** Internal mechanisms and the market scrutinise data and opinions provided. This means vendors can only earn validations, placements and recommendations based on the strength of offerings and strategy.

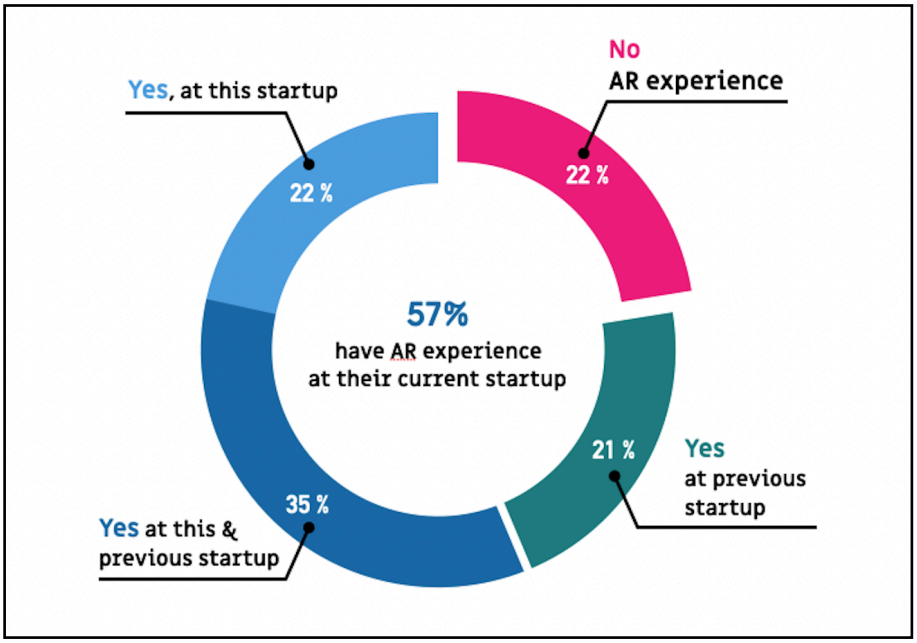
[4] Chris Holscher 2021, Together we can - PR & AR super power, https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/together-we-can/

2. Key findings

The SSIA research has unveiled hundreds of data points substantiated by valuable comments. This section presents a summary of particularly interesting and actionable findings.

The chart below lays a foundation for the research by showing the makeup of startup participants by their AR experience.

78% of respondents have gathered experience in working with industry analysts. 57% did so at their current startup and 56% at previous startups. Only 22% say they have no experience with analyst relations at all.



This data is mirrored by 79% of respondents currently working with industry analysts in some way. Only one in five startups does not work with analysts.

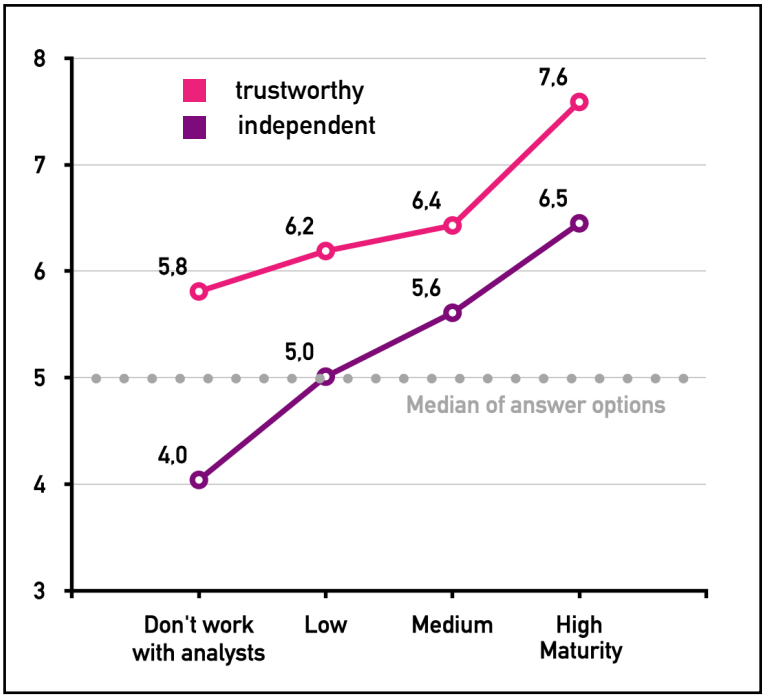
The reasons can be grouped into scepticism towards the value proposition, perceived lack of maturity, and lack of know-how.

- 35% say analyst offerings are too expensive or the ROI is unclear.
- 32% believe analysts are "pay-for-play".
- 29% believe it is too early or they are too small to engage.
- 21% are not familiar with AR and don't know how.

A majority of 55% of all responding startups rate working with industry analysts as either very important or essential to their priorities.

2.1. Experience increases trust

The more mature a startup is in working with industry analysts, the more knowledgeable, independent and trustworthy they regard them.



The less experience a startup had with industry analysts, the more sceptically the respondent rated analysts' trustworthiness and independence. Participants with no or minimal experience in working with analysts also provided negative comments. Value, knowledge and trustworthiness were questioned, if not downright negated.

As the experience level grows, the ratings of trustworthiness and independence improve significantly.

As an extra validation, we compared participants' self-assessment of AR maturity to other qualifying indicators such as the types of engagement, the source of experience, and the levels of investment.

What it means

- There is scepticism towards industry analysts in the startup community.
- Analysts earn a positive reputation from interaction to interaction and through more comprehensive engagements.
- AR specialists must protect vendors from analyst firms that only pretend to have an analyst business model but, in fact, provide marketing services without the impartiality that is crucial to the analyst value proposition.

- When such misleading offerings are identified, technology vendors and buyers should inform independent organisations such as the IIAR[5] to protect the industry.

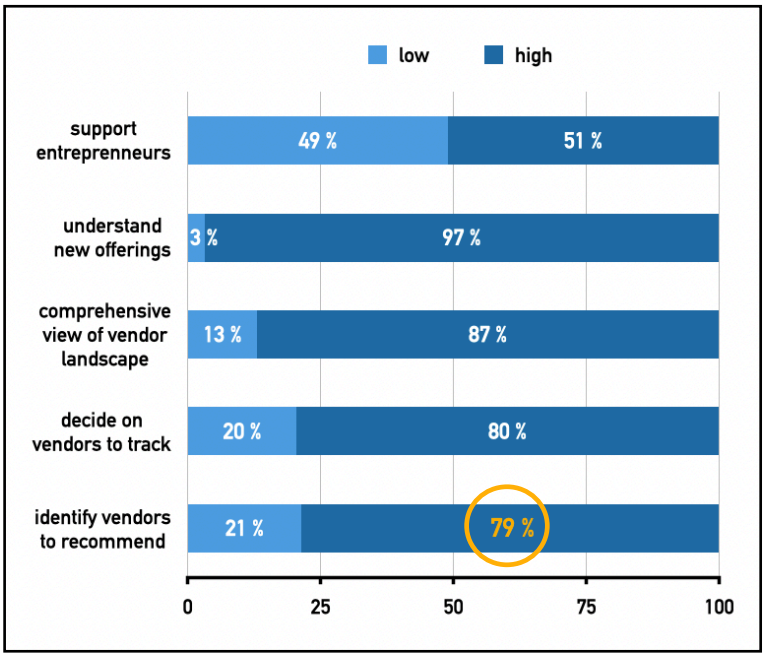
2.2. Insights-driven value

The strongest motivations for industry analysts to work with startups and the premier value that startups can get are both insights-driven. This should guide a startup's approach to working with analysts.

72% of industry analysts rate working with startups as very important or essential to their research and end-clients needs.

Still, startups get no edge just by philanthropic support. Analysts' motivations to work with them are clearly business driven.

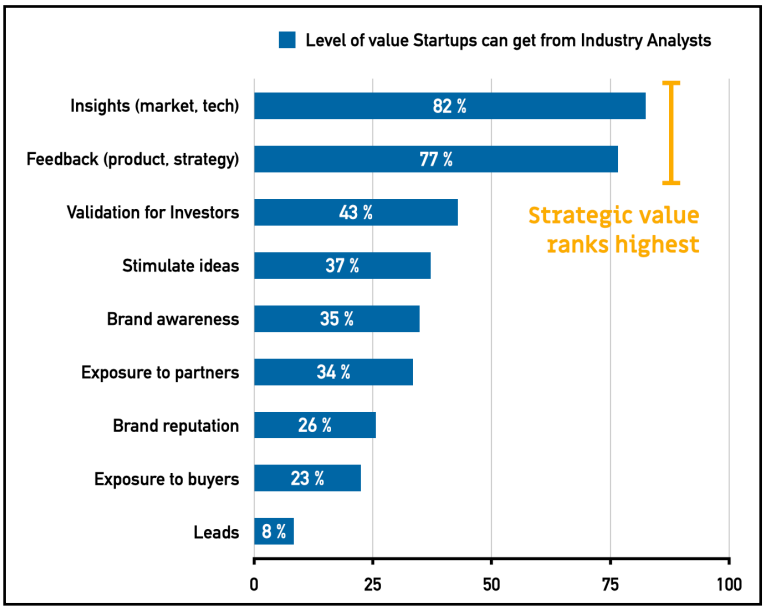
Analysts must maintain a comprehensive and detailed understanding of the market and the latest offerings. A common point provided through comments was that analysts are keen to have their beliefs challenged by new thinking.



80% of analysts mention identifying new vendors to track for their research as a key motivation. 79% are specifically keen to identify emerging vendors to recommend to buyers. Startups, on the other hand, are not aware of this opportunity. Only 10% of startups consider "exposure to buyers" as a value they might get from industry analysts.

5 Institute of Influencer and Analyst Relations. The IIAR is a not-for-profit organisation, established to raise awareness of analyst relations and the value of industry analysts, promote best practice amongst analyst relations professionals, enhance communication between analyst firms and vendors, and offer opportunities for AR practitioners to network with their industry peers.

When asked about the primary value that startups can get from them, industry analysts rank market- and technology insights and feedback on startups' products and strategies as the two most vital points.

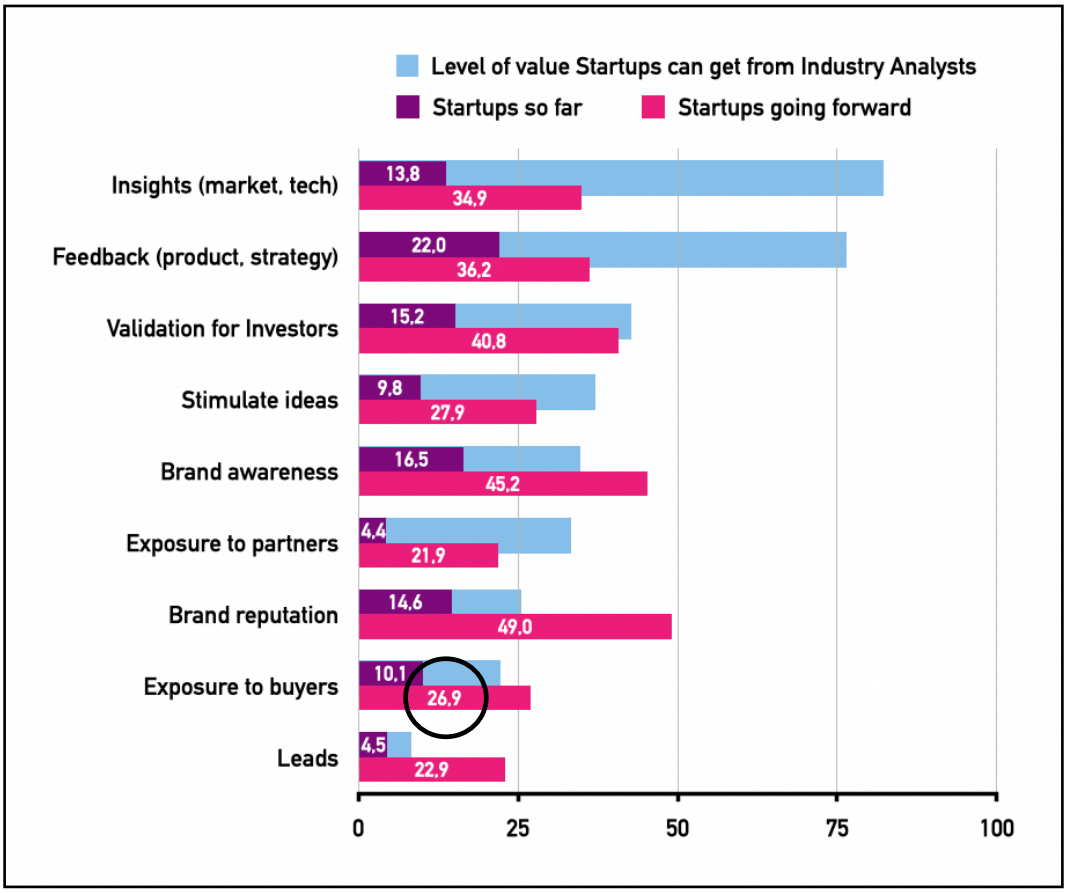


What it means

- Startups must not underestimate the value they have to industry analysts. Analysts want complete market awareness and are keen to spot innovative approaches first. It is a startup's one ticket to an introductory briefing.
- Analysts that have been well-briefed by startups can provide qualified visibility as and when startups' target audiences inquire about them.
- Analysts want to find the gold but must avoid false positives by all means. While identifying vendors to track and recommend to buyers forms one of the strongest motivations of industry analysts, not every startup can get recommended. Recommendations must be earned over time and depends entirely on the startup's engagement approach, the innovativeness of their offering, and the quality of information they can provide.

2.3. Guidance is needed to align expectations and opportunities

Startups have seized only a fraction of the value potential so far, but SSIA research participants are discovering the opportunity.



Startups and analysts are aligned in their views that product and strategy feedback is among the primary value to get. But only one in five startups thinks they have seized that value so far.

Startups also expect that they can improve the value they can get from analysts across all categories two- to fourfold. This expectation overshoots analysts' views dramatically in some sales and marketing-related dimensions.

Most notably, startups expect to be able to get leads from industry analysts, but analysts do not see that as their job. Analysts are keen to increase their own value to buyers by recommending an emerging vendor that they believe makes a great fit for a specific problem or ambition of the buyer. But they do not grow their buy-side reputation by providing vendors with leads—quite the contrary. Analysts love match-making - but startups must understand how it is done and its logic.

What it means

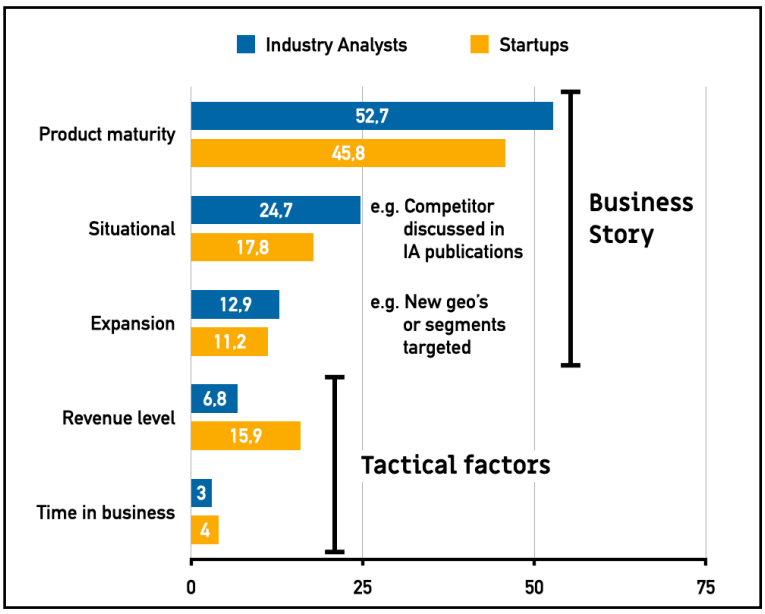
- The data indicates that education is needed to align expectations and opportunities in strategically using startup AR.

- Guidance is then needed to seize these opportunities. It is critical to lead the engagement wisely. There is never a second chance to make a first impression. The limited time analysts have available means that startups cannot expect to be granted more than one chance to convince the analyst of being relevant to their coverage.

2.4. Earlier access

Startups can get meaningful access to industry analysts much earlier than they believe - which can result in significant time advantages in areas like product-market-fit (PMF) and brand amplification.

Startups generally align with analysts' recommendations about when they should begin to engage.

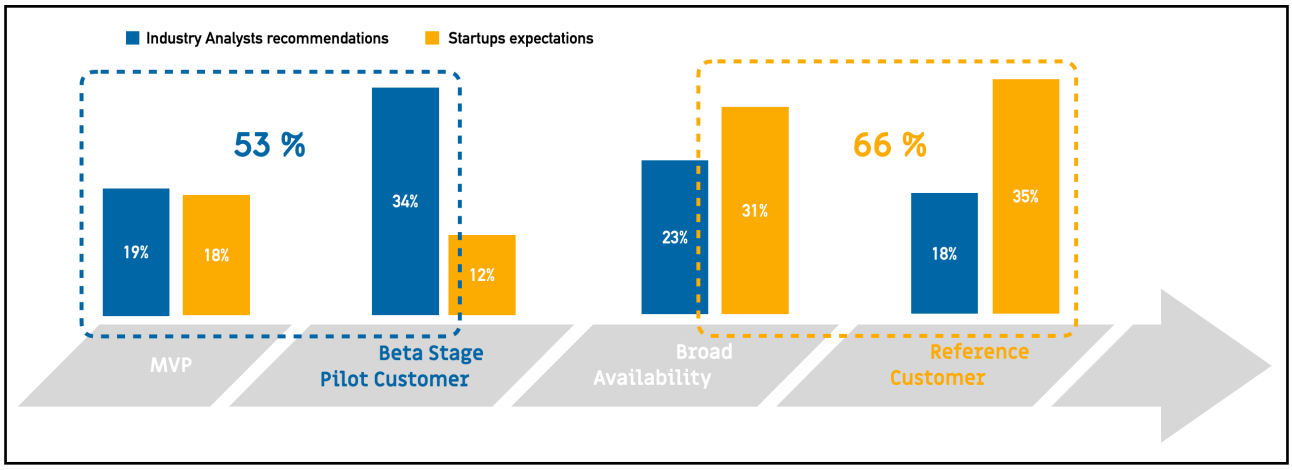


Product maturity is by far the most relevant factor for initiating analyst relations.

Revenue is the only exception in that it is not even regarded half as relevant by analysts as startups believe it is.

Generally, the business story ranks higher than tactical factors like revenue level or time in business.

While the majority of startups believe that broad availability or even reference customers are required to become relevant to industry analysts, these analysts want to hear from startups much earlier, namely at beta stage or even as early as a minimal viable product (MVP) can be shown.



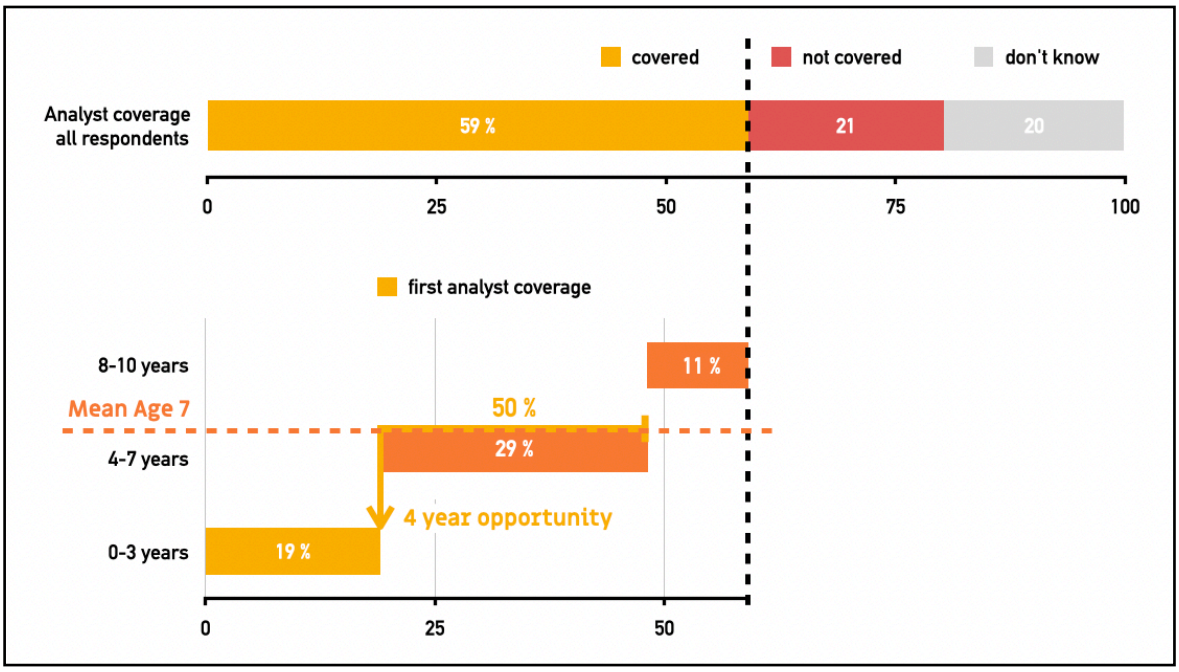
What it means

- AR is not for large, established vendors only. Quite the contrary is true.
- Since lack of business maturity is not seen as a hurdle by most analysts, startups should take the opportunity to bring a special quality of feedback and insights into the company at such early stages.
- Early reliable feedback on PMF empowers startups to move faster at lower risk and can demonstrate management qualities to partners and investors.
- Understanding the time and effort it takes to get from MVP to a first solid reference customer, the advantage of accelerating PMF and getting qualified brand amplification earlier can be measured in months, if not years.

  We will return to this observation in the next chapter that deals with startups' age at first mentions in analyst publications.

2.5. Brand amplification can be pulled forward by years

Half of the startups achieved mentions in analyst publications at 4-7 years in business, and 1 in 5 startups did so within their first three years, defining an impressive opportunity to advance qualified brand amplification by up to 4 years.



59% of respondents had achieved analyst coverage in such publications as market reports, emerging vendor reports, investor reports, and expert articles. 41% were not covered or did not know.

The mean startup age at their first analyst coverage is seven years.

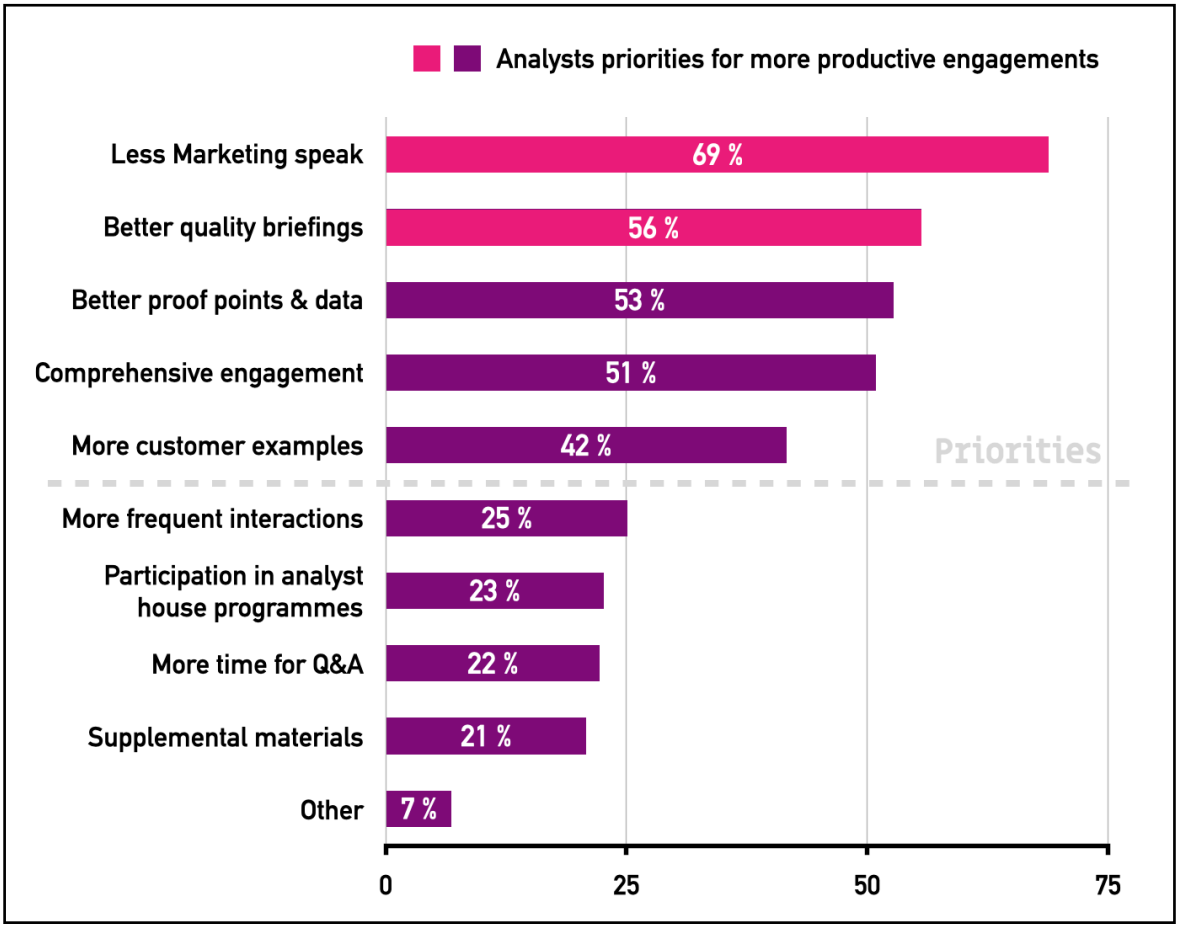
Half of the startups with analyst coverage achieved these mentions at 4 to 7 years in business, but 19% did so within their first three years.

What it means

- Industry analyst publications can be a great asset to use with investors, partners, prospects and existing clients. But analysts do not necessarily tell startups when they are mentioned. Therefore startups need to monitor for coverage.
- There is a clear correlation between startups with experience in analyst relations and those that achieved analyst coverage.
- The four-year advantage of startups who achieved mentions early over peers who did so at the mean age of 7 years in business shows the stunning room for improvement in startups' AR approaches and activities. While it is expectable that the relevance of a new offering is the most vital driver for mentions, the data in chapters 2.2 , 2.3 , 2.6 , and 2.7 indicates how startup AR can be more effective.

2.6. Better engagement

The two most recommended improvements for startup engagement with analysts are less marketing speak and better briefings.[6]



The data and comments from the analyst version of the survey show that analysts are frustrated with interactions that are led by a marketing mindset. Typical comments were: Don't pitch to us, don't sell to us.

One in three analysts specifically called for more AR expertise in analyst engagements.

A more comprehensive engagement was prioritised twice as often as simply a higher cadence of interactions.

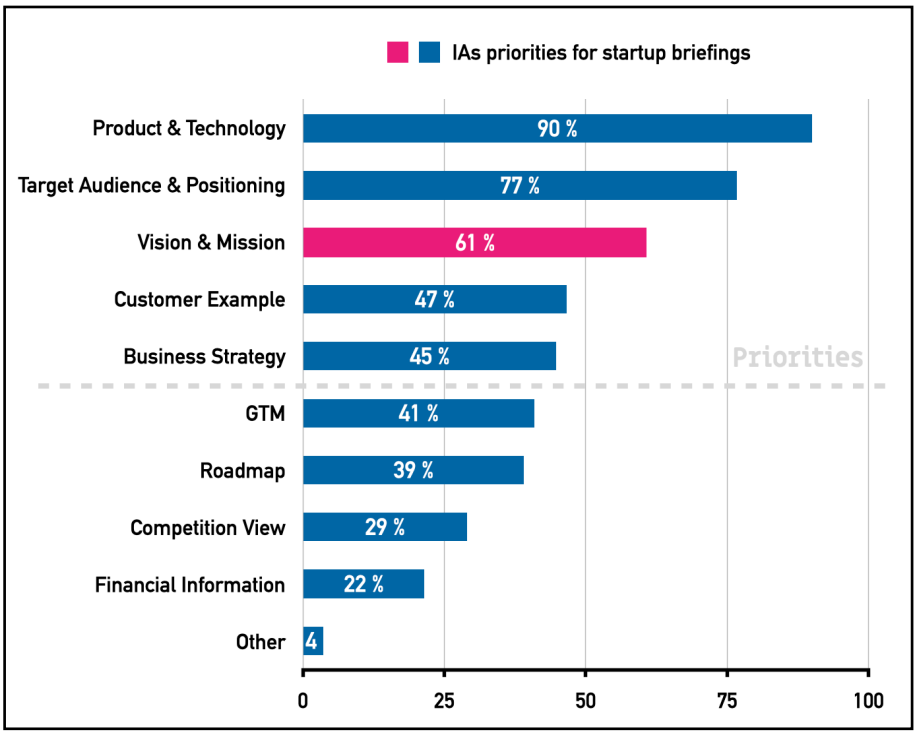
What it means

- This is in line with the earlier discussed data about the value that analysts can provide.
- The twice as high prioritisation of comprehensiveness over cadence speaks to analysts' interest in high-quality bi-directional exchange instead of "share of calendar" thinking. More evidence for the value of an insights-driven approach.

[6] For a practitioner compendium of what analysts want from vendors in general, review Robin Schaffer "Analysts on Analyst Relations", 2020, ISBN 978-0-906378-14-4

2.7. Better introductory briefings

Information about the product and technology is essential to a startup's introductory briefing, but specifics about the strategic business design outranks even roadmap, competition and financial information.



Top priorities named by analysts for introductory briefings focus on the young company's business design.

Three of the five top-ranking aspects deal with the strategic perspective, including the startup's vision and mission, positioning and business strategy.

The often derided vision and mission rank more than 30 points ahead of even the company's go-to-market approach and roadmap and about 50 points ahead of competition view and financial information.

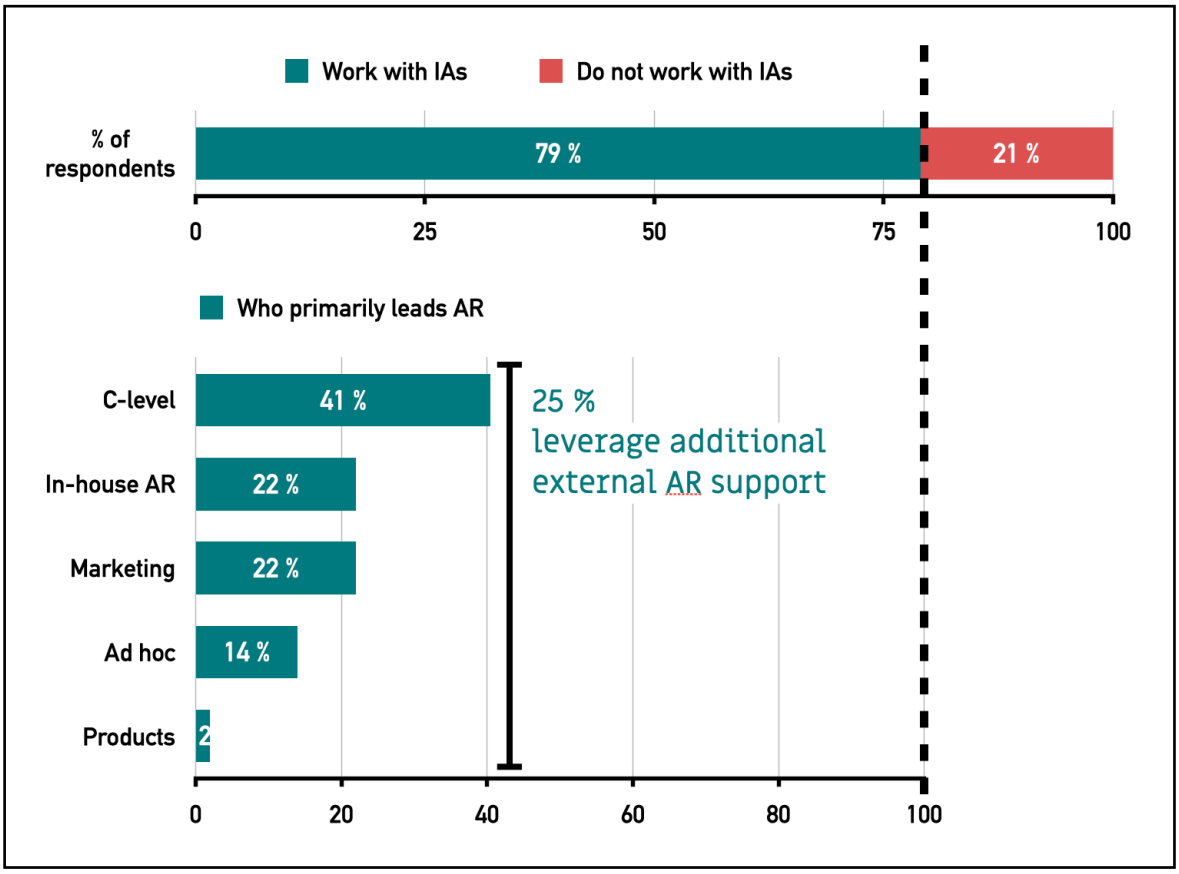
What it means

- A startup briefing has a different character than a regular briefing and a very different character than an investor pitch.
- An analyst primarily wants to learn something new and to qualify the vendor in light of their research agenda and buy-side client relevance.
- Analysts have a lot more breadth and depth of knowledge of a startup's target market in terms of competitors' offerings, roadmaps and buy-side demand. They are also very technical. Therefore, priorities, types and depth of information and even tone of voice differ from, e.g. a pitch to investors.
- Startups who aim to get on industry analysts' radars should appreciate the analyst's perspective and tailor their briefing to the purpose. Recycling a VC pitch - or worse, a sales pitch - is an entry card burned.

2.8. AR is best handled by AR specialists

Delegating AR from C-level or Marketing-, Products-, or Strategy units to a dedicated AR role improves effectiveness and value immensely.

Managing the analyst engagement is not to be confused with the speaker role of a subject matter expert or an executive at an analyst interaction. AR management means the strategy for AR, goals, planning, preparation, handling, and follow-up of interactions, and applying insights with internal stakeholders. It is time-consuming, requires expertise in analyst policies and procedures and is ideally empowered by combined experience from previous roles in business development, pre-sales, marketing, and product management.



Eight in ten startups that responded are working with industry analysts in some way.

But of these, only 22% pointed to a specific in-house AR role, be it dedicated or as part of other units.

Another 22% manage AR more generally through their marketing unit. 14% even handle AR admittedly ad hoc.

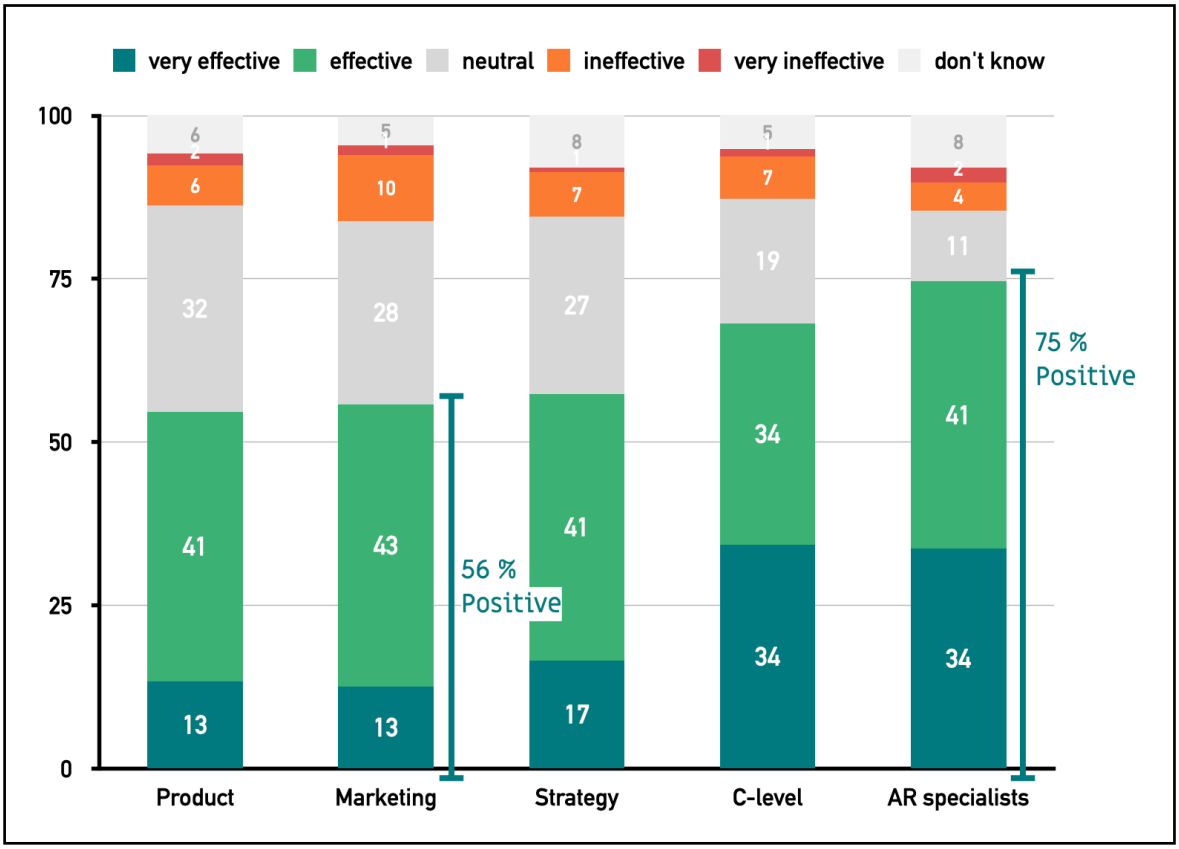
Only 2% responded that their product team manages AR. This is a surprise, given that analysts have deep product expertise and offer precisely the type of insights that matter most to product managers.

At 41%, the largest portion of startups manages their analyst engagements through their C-Level executives, often the founders. This was the case the younger the startup and the fewer touchpoints it had with analysts to that point.

25% of startups who work with industry analysts bring in external AR guidance and services in the form of AR consultants, agencies or specialised venture partners via their VCs or accelerator organisations.

What it means

- When founders and C-level lead AR, it indicates that these startups appreciate the strategic importance of the relationship and the information exchange.
- At the same time, C-level has the highest opportunity cost and proves most dependent on external AR support. CEOs simply lack the capacity to develop the necessary know-how and proper handling beyond just the speaker role in an interaction.



When comparing how industry analysts rate the effectiveness of internal entities in managing AR, unsurprisingly, AR specialists get the strongest net-positive rating (positive minus negative minus neutral ratings).

AR specialists get a 75% overall positive rating, with a net positive of 58%, leading all other ways of organising by significant margins.

The C-suite is rated at 68% overall positive, with a net positive of 41%, and thus trailing AR specialists by 17 points on the 100-scale.

Marketing units are rated at just 56% positive, with a net positive rating of only 17% and trailing AR specialists by a remarkable 41 points.

Analysts' comments were passionately in line with the data, recommending that wherever they can work with solid AR leaders, the value for both sides is multiplied.

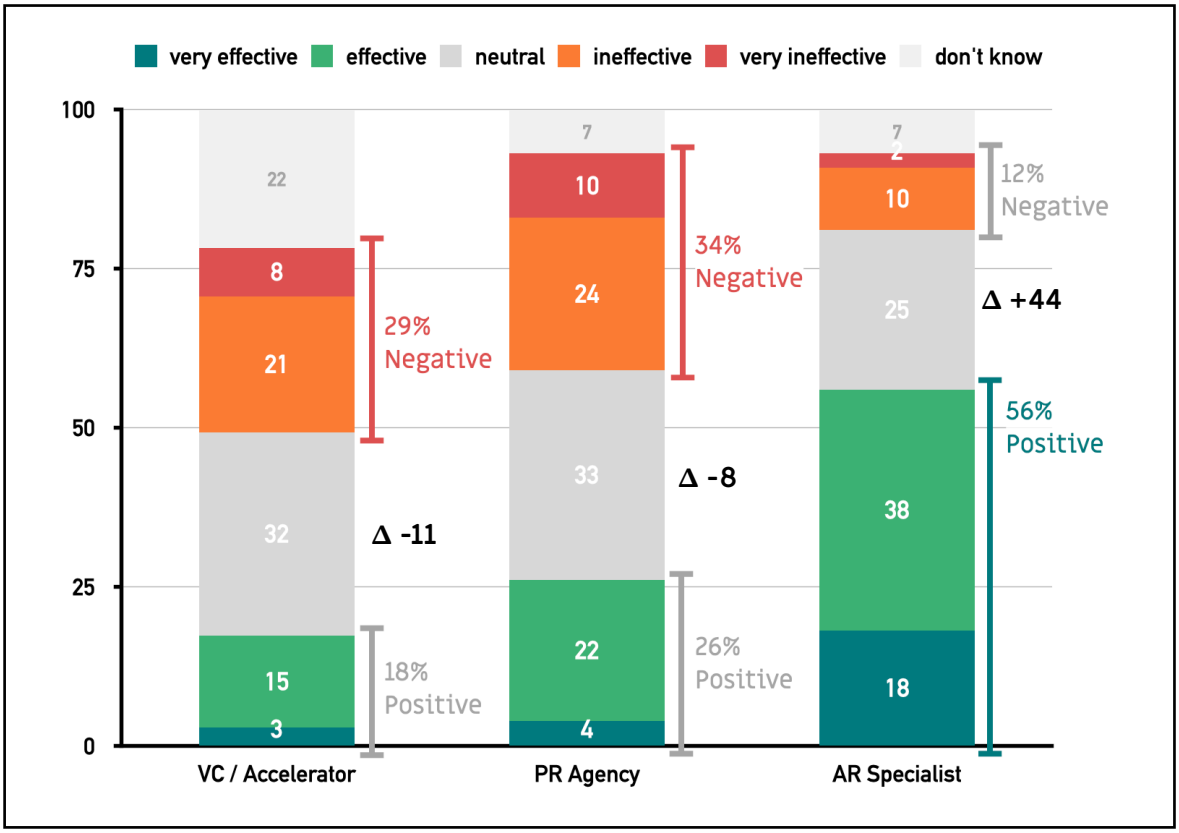
What it means

- Functional units like product teams, marketing, and strategy have the opportunity to improve the effectiveness of AR and, thus, the value that they can significantly benefit from ensuring that AR as a function is delegated to a specialist role - be it dedicated or part of another entity.
- The same is true for C-suite executives. Practitioners see the C-suite and AR specialists as the dream team for effective analyst relations engagement. AR specialists use their expertise to maximise the possibilities with the analysts and bring insights right into the marketing-, product- and strategy units. Founders and C-level can then focus on leveraging the made playing field in highly productive analyst interactions and then use the outcomes with clients and stakeholders.
- As impressive as the data and verbatims from analyst participants are, not every startup can afford, let alone find, an in-house AR specialist at early stages.

2.9. Choice of external AR support is critical

Choosing the right external partner for AR guidance can make the difference between an uphill battle and a flywheel.

We've asked the 200+ participating industry analysts how they rate the effectiveness of external support for startup analyst relations management. Our data revealed reservations regarding PR agencies, and analysts' comments illustrated these.



Industry analysts attribute the PR agency universe a net-negative effectiveness rating of -41 points. Even if neutrals are not considered, the net rating remains negative, being -8 for PR agencies' effectiveness in analyst relations services.

With such dramatic data, we want to point out that there are also 4% of "very effective" ratings for PR agencies, likely those with dedicated and trained AR specialists.

Practitioners will agree that the issue for the overall perception of AR is really with the staggering 34% negative ratings for PR agencies regarded as ineffective or very ineffective by the very target group of industry analysts they are trying to engage with. These dimensions suggest a fundamental misconception in many PR agencies about what the complete purpose of analyst relations really is, what it therefore needs and how it works.

VCs and accelerators providing AR through their own organisations rank even less favourably with a net negative rating of -43 (or -11 if neutrals are not considered). However, the fact that this group also received 22% of "don't know" answers from industry analysts indicates that it is much less prevalent. Instead, we found that more experienced VCs and accelerators tend to work with AR specialists as venture partners.

AR specialists are rated as the most effective external support by far. "Very effective" ratings are 6x higher than VCs and accelerators and 4x higher than PR agencies.

What it means

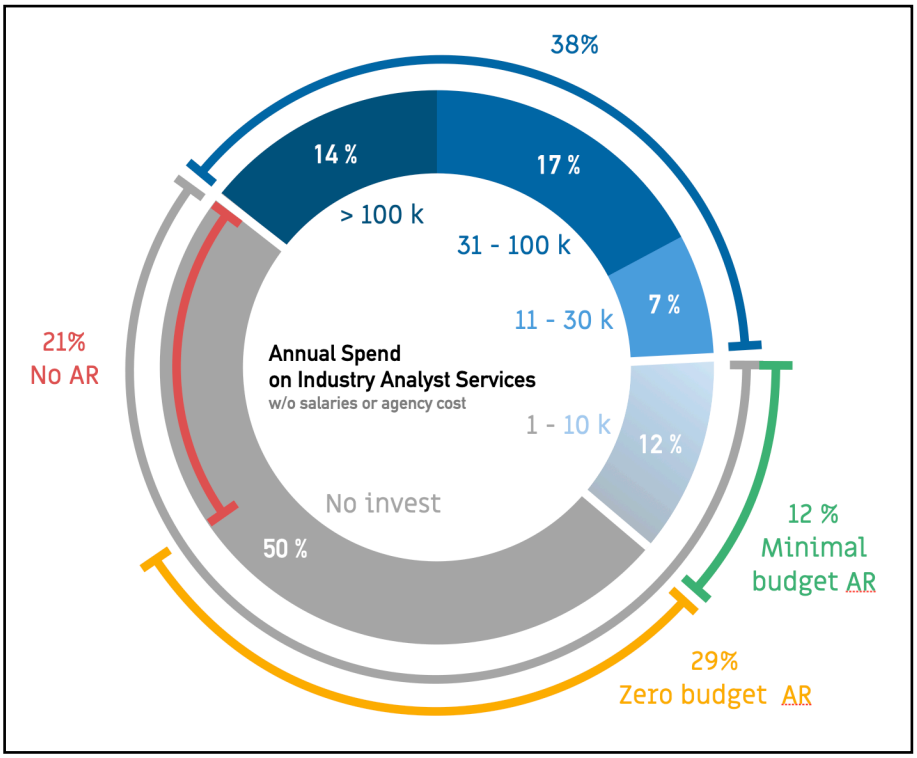
- Startups must be aware that choosing the right external partner for AR guidance can enormously impact analysts' perception of the engagement quality. Is it time well spent or not.
- Analysts have accumulated strong reservations about a PR agency's handling of AR in an "influence the influencer" type of mindset, which they evidently dislike.
- A predominantly outbound approach to AR leaves most of the actual value untapped, as seen in the data shown in previous chapters of this study.
- VCs and accelerators are on the right path in partnering with AR specialists to address the topic productively for the b2b technology portion of their portfolio companies. As seen in other chapters, AR can help VCs shorten time to PMF, accelerate qualified visibility and de-risk the startup's journey - all essential factors to amplify the value of their best investments in one go.

2.10. Phased investment

Startups invest in analyst relations in a step-by-step manner. The majority of startups and their ecosystem of VCs and Accelerators aim to intensify AR activities going forward.

Combining the data points from startups' AR activities and their AR investment, we can display how startups tap into AR.

All investment data shown below purely relates to industry analyst services such as subscriptions to startup-specific programmes, purchasing of individual reports or inquiry time. Investment does not reflect salaries, cost of advisory, or agency services.

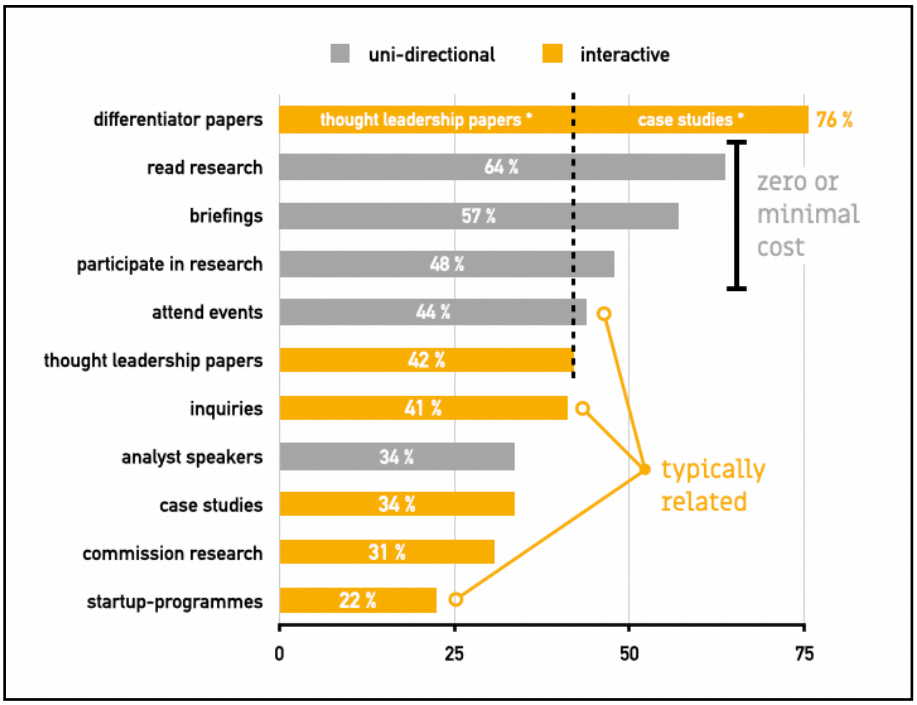


31% of startups invest > USD 31k in using industry analysts' insights and influence, including 14% investing > USD 100k per year.

7% take a very selective approach to AR with budgets in the range of USD 11-30k.

12% explore AR with a minimal budget of USD 1-10k, and 29% tap into AR with no budget for analyst services at all. Participant comments explained that one part of the latter group is in the preparation phase of (free) introduction briefings. The other part simply does not know how to work with analysts and is pushing out the decision.

Investment is primarily spent on the production of differentiating collateral such as thought leadership papers (42%), case studies (34%) and commissioned research (31%). Research subscriptions rank relatively low (22%), although some analyst firms offer special packages for startups, typically including broad access to research, citation rights, inquiry rights, and to some degree event participation.



The 35% lead of investment in differentiator material over inquiry rights and 54% lead over startup programmes indicates that startups regard AR predominantly in an outbound mindset. Insights-driven investment, e.g. in inquiry rights or commissioned research, ranks far lower in volume.

Startups intuitively follow a phased approach to AR.

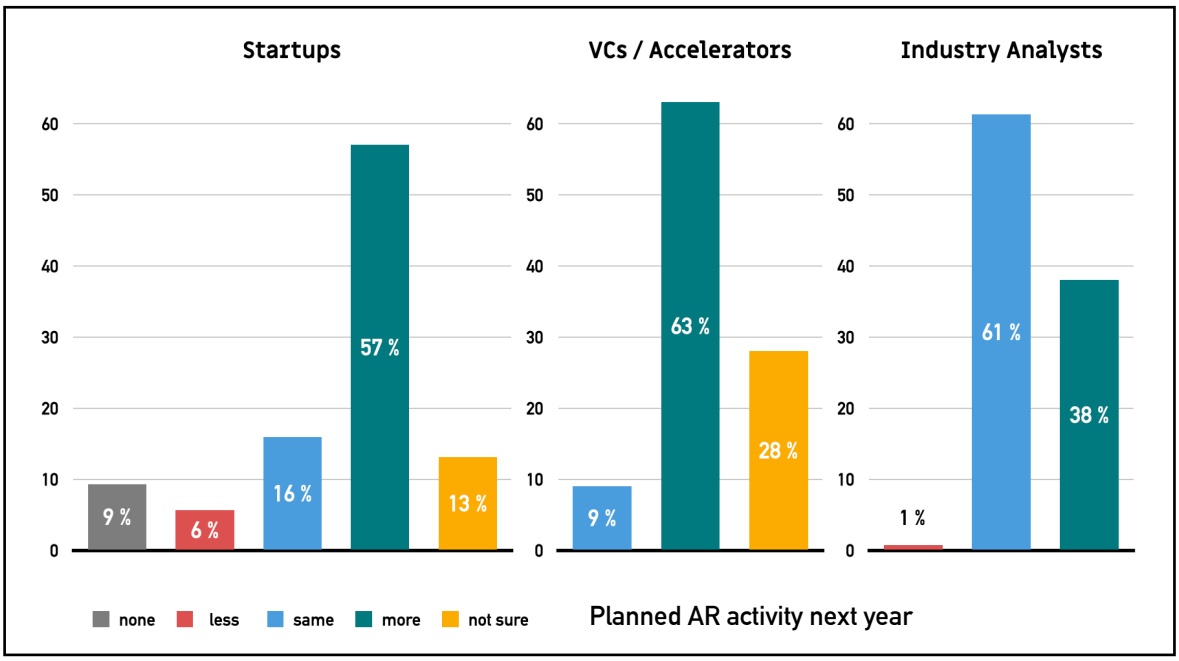
More startups, generally earlier stage, use free of charge or minimal cost instruments that are of tactical and uni-directional character, such as consuming research and delivering briefings.

Mature startups leverage more strategic, higher value, and more interactive activities. These are higher cost, such as the use of inquiry time, but also commissioned research, the joint production of thought leadership papers, or independently validated case studies.

What it means

- The nature of the analyst relations playing field allows startups to adopt a phased approach. They can tap into AR with zero or minimal budget and advance to selective and strategic investment as they understand the value.
- Even with a selective AR investment, startups can gain an advantage over two-thirds of their peers.
- The stretch of AR investment from minimal to USD >100k mirrors the startup maturity life cycle. This correlates with the earlier mentioned trend of higher AR experience, equating to a higher appreciation of analyst independence and trustworthiness.
- The dominance of marketing-oriented and insights-oriented instruments reflects the significant gap in understanding and utilising the primary value that analysts can provide.

- The top rank of material that differentiates a brand indicates startups' preference for instruments of which they already understand the ROI.
- Startup programmes by analyst firms typically provide strategic- and insight-oriented instruments. Startups with low AR expertise are unsure about the effective use of these instruments and lack confidence in substantial, multi-year investments.



The majority of participating startups, VCs and accelerators aim to intensify AR activities going forward. An additional 13% of startups and 28% of the ecosystem intend to qualify the topic further.

One in three industry analysts indicates a desire to increase focus on startups if startups make efficient use of the time.

What it means

- The high percentages of intended expansion of startup activities with analysts have two sources.
  - As startups grow and gather experience in seizing the value of industry analyst engagement, they typically extend their use of analyst instruments and their application across business functions.
  - To a degree, the SSIA survey itself may have driven awareness and interest in the topic among the participants.
- Industry analysts' desire to work more with startups illustrates the increasing relevance of true innovators to analysts' end clients, both among technology buyers as well as M&A and investors.
- It must be considered that analysts' time capacities are limited by research calendars and the weight of established vendors. This means that analysts' interest in working with startups can only be effectively met with demonstrated AR know-how from the point of initial contact.

3. Conclusions

Startups are in a difficult position as they innovate with few resources, time pressures, and in highly competitive environments. The concept of discussing - not pitching - their business design, products and technologies, unvarnished and in great depth with external market experts, may feel uncomfortable. The idea of industry analyst relationships being based on the appreciation of facts and impartiality, instead of a financial transaction, requires a learning curve. This learning curve can be traced throughout the SSIA research data and comments, starting with the perception of trustworthiness to questions of investment and planned activity.

Naturally, startups have a gap to close in analyst relations against established vendors. But analysts may also be their single most interested audience - and among the top influential voices in the market as well. This fact cannot be put aside. Ignoring it is a risk. Embracing it is an opportunity.

The requirement of startups to shorten the time to product-market-fit and to reduce risk along the way, the need to break through the white noise of vendor self-praise and to build solid third-party reputation are all classic value propositions of industry analysts. These have already proven powerful over decades.

All key findings of the SSIA research support the conclusion that b2b technology startups should evaluate the role of industry analysts in their segment early and address the opportunity strategically.

The deficits in startups' awareness and understanding of AR that we uncovered point to a need for education and guidance. The ecosystem of VCs and accelerators can play a critical enabling role here. The fact that startups grow trust and investment in the industry analyst business model alongside developing their AR experience - is a glowing endorsement.

Suppose the startup sector uses this lever systematically. In that case, it can mean a whole new quality and dynamic for founders, investors, and established vendors and be fresh energy for our working societies.

3.1. For Startups

Working with industry analysts can be a powerful accelerator in developing your business and competing in the market. But, there is not one answer that fits all needs and purposes. The value propositions of analysts vary widely. Make your strategy and your priorities the starting point.

Calls to action

- Evaluate how analysts impact your space. Think technology and services keywords, think overarching topics, think geographies and target audience.
- Determine how analyst relations can support your objectives and key results in product development, marketing, business development, and with investors.
- Get analyst relations expertise before you reach out. Ask your team, investors, accelerator, and your advisors. Look for an insights-driven approach.

3.2. For Investors and Accelerators

Although you may be using analyst research on emerging technologies and market trends already, consider your role in advising your portfolio companies on industry analyst relations management. Analyst relations can be a solid differentiating value add for well-fitting startups.

Calls to action

- Consider the relevance of industry analysts to the b2b technology startups in your portfolio.
- Determine in which depth you want to support your portfolio in analyst relations: Build AR awareness, help with getting started, or provide ongoing services.
- Consider engaging qualified analyst relations specialists to support these efforts.

3.3. For Analyst firms

This research shows that startups have steep learning curves in working with analysts. Aligning startups' expectations and analysts' possibilities is essential; spreading awareness and orientation via the ecosystem would help.

Startups show a preference for marketing-oriented tools where they can see clearer ROI. This points to an opportunity for analyst firms to rethink startup-tailored programmes and packages.

The value proposition and ROI of insight-oriented services must be demonstrated better to help overcome startup misconceptions and to open this field of value for them.

Startups need proof of value, and they need programs that are tailored to their needs and budgets as they grow from one to the next investment round.

Calls to action

- Evaluate the specific needs and priorities of startups and build your offers accordingly.
- Consider making offerings flexible to give startups the confidence of services that adapt to their changing needs.
- Consider entry packages for startups that match their needs and budgets at the very early stages, where most analysts prefer to first get in touch.

3.4. For AR professionals

The innovativeness of startups makes the perfect canvas to develop AR to its full value potential. Do not underestimate career opportunities in this segment. If you are responsible for AR in a large organisation that also runs its own accelerator programme or supports a skunkworks innovation team, learn to switch gears. There is much to learn from startup AR for mid and large-sized organisations.

Calls to action

- Appreciate the specific needs and possibilities for startups in AR. Do not simply scale down the complexity of large vendors' AR programmes.
- Focus on an insights-driven approach to support all aspects of the company's development. Appreciate that a dynamic way of working is most important in startups. Use the opportunity to teach "your" organisation the amazing value that AR can provide beyond marketing.
- At all times, protect startups from analyst firms that only pretend to have an analyst business model but, in fact, violate the principle of impartiality.

4. Next iterations of the research

This summary of the SSIA report may be updated when further findings surface. Note the version of the report in the footer of each page.

The research team is keen to share these findings with a greater audience through the startup ecosystem, conferences, accelerators, investors, and the startup-specific teams at analyst firms. If you can help us do so, please feel invited to share the report, and please let us know about it.

We will repeat this research on a bi-annual basis to watch trends over time. The core research will be supplemented with special focused topics and deep dives to help all better understand the dynamics of these relationships and their impacts on startup and scaleup success.

We are very open to ideas and suggestions for improvements and your topics of particular interest related to startup AR.

Please do reach out to us directly.



5. Contributors

5.1. Authors

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has initiated the SSIA Report. His visionary take on analyst relations has helped large global organisations and innovative startups succeed. He has a background in innovation management and two decades of experience in B2B product management, marketing, and analyst relations. Chris also leads the German chapter at the IIAR, and you can find him evangelising for AR in Scandinavian startup hubs.

Chris can explain the survey findings in your context and help you to strengthen your AR programme.

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Robin Schaffer



is the North American face of the SSIA Report. She has been involved in helping customers understand and leverage industry analysts for 15 years.

She has worked at multiple international companies, bringing her strong background in b2b marketing to solve tangible business problems through strategic relationships with influential analysts.

Robin can work with you to explain and apply the survey findings to strengthen your AR programme.

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5.2. Support

Analyst Observatory at the University of Edinburgh Business School

The Analyst Observatory supports and promotes comprehensive and rigorous analysis of how technology startups gain competitive advantage from analyst endorsements.

The Observatory is part of the ESRC-funded Second Pitch Research Project at the University of Edinburgh Business School. It is independent of analysts.

https://www.ao.business-school.ed.ac.uk/

Neil Pollock



is a Professor of Innovation & Social Informatics at the University of Edinburgh. He has pioneered academic research on industry analysts.

He is currently carrying out the Economic and Social Research Council project 'the second most important pitch' and co-authoring (with Robin Williams) the first book-length study of industry analyst influence on technology markets: How Industry Analysts Shape the Digital Market (Oxford University Press)

Alongside this academic research, Neil is also interested in building a more comprehensive policy understanding of how industry analysts are important for new venture growth and scaling.

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is a research assistant at the University of Edinburgh and a 4th year PhD student. Her research focuses on Fintech, alternative finance, and socially responsible forms of investing.

She has advised both, governmental and non-governmental groups on developing strategies and investment policies. Alina supports the SSIA report as our Statistics (SPSS) black belt. She ensured data quality and accurate interpretation.

5.3. Sponsors

Our sponsors generously supported the researchers with their immediate interest in the subject and encouragement. The sponsors did not influence the survey design, questionnaires, or analysis.

ARinsights

Founded in 2004, ARInsights are the masterminds behind AR productivity software ARchitect. ARchitect empowers Analyst Relations professionals to optimise knowledge sharing with industry analysts and manage their workflow from a single, integrated platform.

www.arinsights.com

Spotlight AR

Spotlight AR lives and breathes the perspective of insights-driven analyst relations in serving clients from Fortune 500 companies to startups. Their AR intelligence platform Spotlight Oz provides a central overview of team activities and a collective memory of insights for consistent and effective AR collaboration.

www.spotlightar.com

Thanks...

...to all contributors, supporters, and our families who have encouraged (and endured) us after countless late night and early morning sessions between US and European time zones.