



THE INTERSECTION OF INFLUENCE.

2026 STUDY
(FOURTH ANNUAL EDITION)

About the South China Morning Post (SCMP)

The South China Morning Post (SCMP) is the premier English-language news platform in Hong Kong, with over 123 years of storied history and significant global influence. We focus on key topics about China, including Hong Kong, while providing essential global news coverage.

We believe that high-quality news reporting is built on the insight and networks of professional journalists. The SCMP has an international editorial team spanning Hong Kong, the Chinese Mainland, North America, Latin America, Europe, Africa and Asia, closely following hot topics in China and the rest of Asia, and their global impact. With outstanding editorial expertise and a rigorous approach, we provide valuable news content and insights.

Powered by its parent company Alibaba Group's cutting-edge technology, SCMP has evolved into the leading multimedia digital news outlet. Through its website, mobile app, social media channels and video content, it delivers comprehensive and dependable reporting to a global audience, providing the essential perspective and clarity required to understand China and Asia.

Beyond its editorial leadership, SCMP offers a robust suite of international forums about China and creative advertising solutions to help businesses build international credibility and navigate the complexities of the global landscape. Meanwhile, our education services help the next generation develop their English and other important skills to thrive in the future.

About SCMP Advertising+

For more than 120 years, the South China Morning Post has been entrusted by both readers and partners in Hong Kong and elsewhere in Asia to tell their stories to over 35 million readers each month. SCMP Advertising+ connects partners to affluent Asian influencers and business decision-makers through culturally relevant content and events that drive connection and consideration. Its first-party data platform and brand safety tools deliver impact through insights and context. SCMP Advertising+ is designed for partners who want to shape the next chapter of Hong Kong and Asia's story.

About HarrisX (a Stagwell Company)

HarrisX is a global market research, data analytics and strategy consulting company that leverages cutting-edge technology, data and creativity to drive strategic growth for its clients. It delivers an agile, iterative and evidence-driven process that combines speed, scale and sophistication. It has a deep history of marrying behavioural data with attitudinal surveys, survey-based statistics and third-party data to provide comprehensive business answers and rich storytelling for clients. It blends proprietary syndicated data with custom research and deep industry expertise across 12 different sectors in more than 40 countries. Its team is nimble and interactive, and applies the latest advances in technology, machine learning and AI to solve complex problems in real time. This is how it connects all the dots for its clients.



Executive remarks

Influencing the Influential

More than 25 years ago, I pioneered *South China Morning Post's* very first digital advertisements as a partner of the Post. Since then, through founding an ad tech firm and establishing the Interactive Advertising Bureau Hong Kong, I have witnessed a massive paradigm shift in our industry. We have moved firmly away from simply measuring impressions, a legacy metric focused purely on viewability, toward engagement and, crucially, attention.

As marketers rightfully embrace attention metrics, our latest report, *The Intersection of Influence*, provides vital colour regarding how context, situation and media channels alter consumer behaviour.

This work is important for Hong Kong and the region. Today, premium news media have significantly greater influence than other channels, especially when your brand is looking for high-impact, deep connections with the influential.

Our findings challenge standard assumptions about media performance, highlighting four critical truths:

- A clear majority of Hong Kong adults are fully or mostly focused when they consume news apps, the highest level measured across channels.
- News apps lead the attention economy; they're the single highest-attention channel available to advertisers.
- Quality journalism outlasts scroll, and editorial content builds a lasting cognitive connection.
- People use news media with purpose. Usage peaks in the morning and then again in the afternoon, when key daily decisions are made, unlike the passive media environments that dominate in the evening.

Decision-makers read with purpose and act on insight, making them the priority audience for brands. By leveraging high-impact platforms rooted in editorial integrity, brands can align themselves with trusted content to drive meaningful influence. Success belongs to marketers who design for attention quality, audience intent and the environments that create the right kind of attention for the task at hand.

I invite you to read on for more insights.

Best regards,

Kevin Huang
Chief Operating Officer
South China Morning Post

INFLUENCE READS SCMP.



Location: Rosewood Residences Hong Kong

“SCMP gives me the insights and perspective to inspire the next generation.”

STEPHANIE AU (歐鎧淳), five-time Olympian from Hong Kong



South China Morning Post



Foreword

Changing the Planning Conversation

We live in a world where our attention is fractured more than ever. For the vast majority of our history, it was hard to access reliable information, and those who could were able to get ahead of others. This paradigm changed dramatically not that many years ago. Access to information is no longer limited, and we have the completely opposite problem — we are drowning in information and data.

As a result, the truly precious commodity is no longer access to information but the ability to cut through the suddenly omnipresent noise. That is what great journalism can do. But even that is only half the battle. Half of the battle is on the side of the receiver: the individual consumer of information. It is a battle for attention.

That is what our study focuses on. How do readers of news actually ingest information? Building on our work looking at modern media environments and how audiences perceive brands within them, our study looks beyond where audiences spend time to how they behave once they are there. Are they focused or scrolling? Are they filling time or making time? Are they reacting in the moment or using information to make decisions? Does the information they internalise stay with them or is it fleeting?

For marketers, that changes the planning conversation. The job is not just to buy more exposure but to understand which environments create the right kind of attention for the task at hand. Some channels spark discovery, some build understanding, some create trust and some move people closer to action. The smartest media plans recognise that sequence.

Alex Braun
Chief Strategy Officer
Global EVP
HarrisX



South China
Morning Post

ASTOR BALLROOM



SUMMARY

#1 Audiences make time for news

- 68% of Hong Kong adults are fully or mostly focused when they consume news apps, the highest level measured across channels.
- News media is the #1 channel people turn to in the morning, with attention peaking again in the afternoon.

#2 News media command attention

- News apps are the #1 high-attention media channel.
- Core news media channels significantly outperform other channels in terms of audience focus.

#3 News media drives real actions

- News media have more staying power than other channels like social media.
- This staying power is even stronger among high-income, highly educated and business decision-maker groups.

#4 Trust, focus and indispensability

- SCMP ranks #1 in trust for accuracy and quality, and #1 for brand indispensability among major news brands.

About this Study

This study was conducted by HarrisX as a quantitative survey focusing on people in Hong Kong. The fieldwork took place over a six-day period from June 3 to June 8, 2026. The study's scope encompasses two distinct sample groups: a larger sample of the general population (1,193 people) and a targeted sample of business decision-makers (313 people). The research comes with a 2.9 percentage-point margin of error, ensuring a reliable level of statistical precision.

Data for Singapore and Malaysia will be available later in 2026.

#1 Audiences Make Time for News



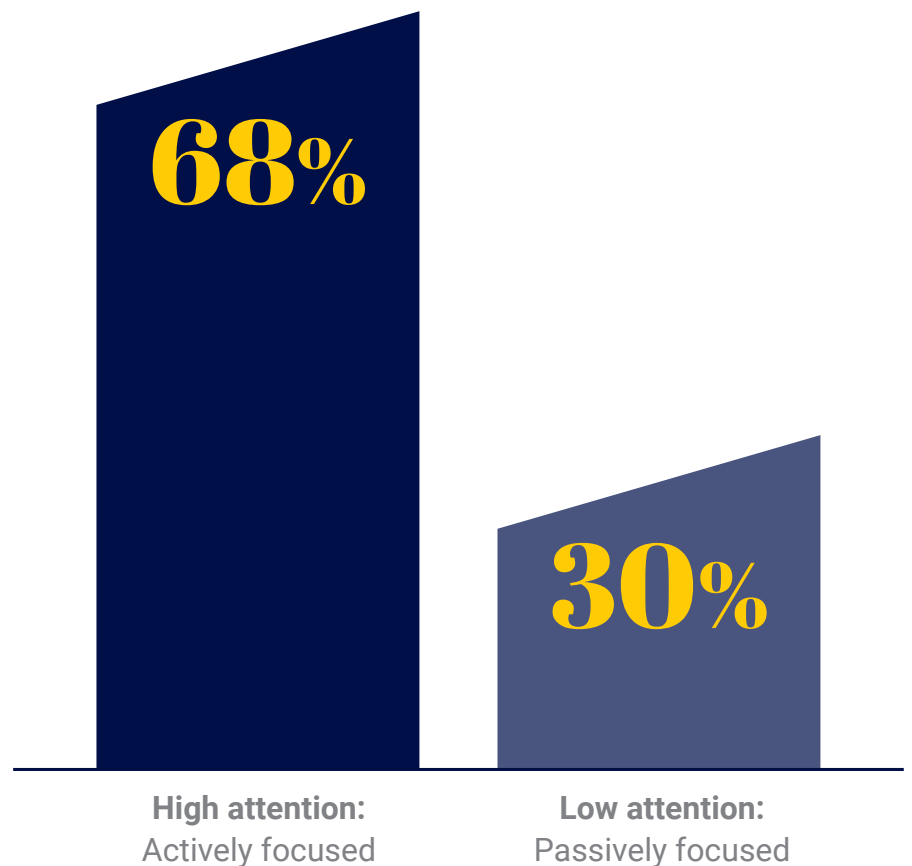
Hong Kong adults are fully or mostly focused when they consume news apps.

People approach premium news with a clear plan, rather than just scrolling to kill time. The study shows a significant trend in how we use media: 56% of people make time to read quality news, while only 44% use it to fill spare moments. Overall, 68% of Hong Kong adults are fully or mostly focused when they consume news apps, the highest level measured across channels. This is more than twice as many as those who passively consume news apps with a divided focus or scrolling behaviour.



How People Consume News Apps

More than twice
as many are focused when
consuming news apps than
passively focused.



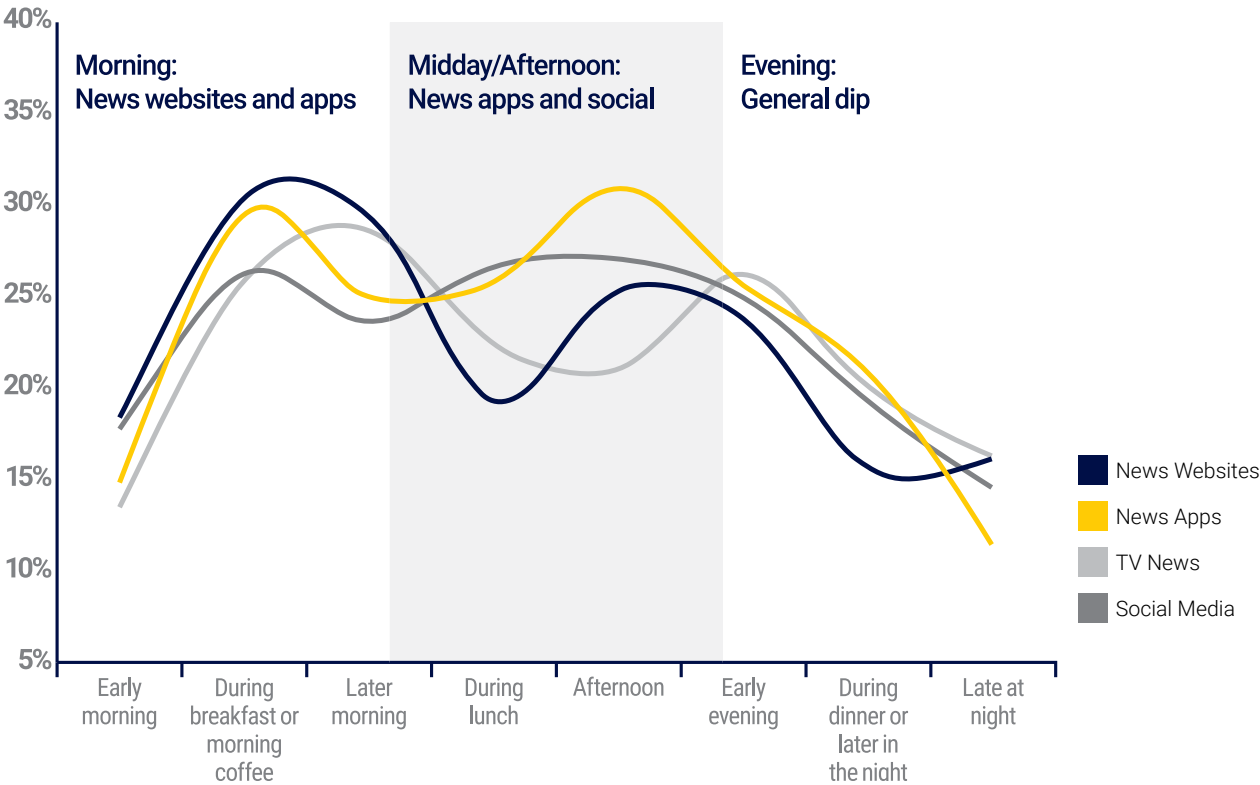
Q: Which statement describes you better, even if neither is exactly right?

I make time for news/social media I believe are worth my attention vs I use news/social media mainly to fill spare moments

This planned reading is highly structured around the daily routine, peaking in both the morning and the afternoon. For most adults, news consumption spikes sharply around breakfast, with news apps reaching a quarter of all adults. For business decision-makers, this morning habit is even stronger – 30% visit news websites and 29% open news apps right as they start their workday to help them plan and make key decisions.

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Time of day Hong Kong business decision-makers consume different types of news



Q: During the work week, when in the day do you normally consume news, current affairs or information from each of the following sources?

Engagement then builds again later in the day, experiencing a second major peak in the afternoon as professionals look for perspective before the day ends. This consistent, purposeful routine catches people when they are highly focused and actively looking for information.

#2 News Media Command Attention



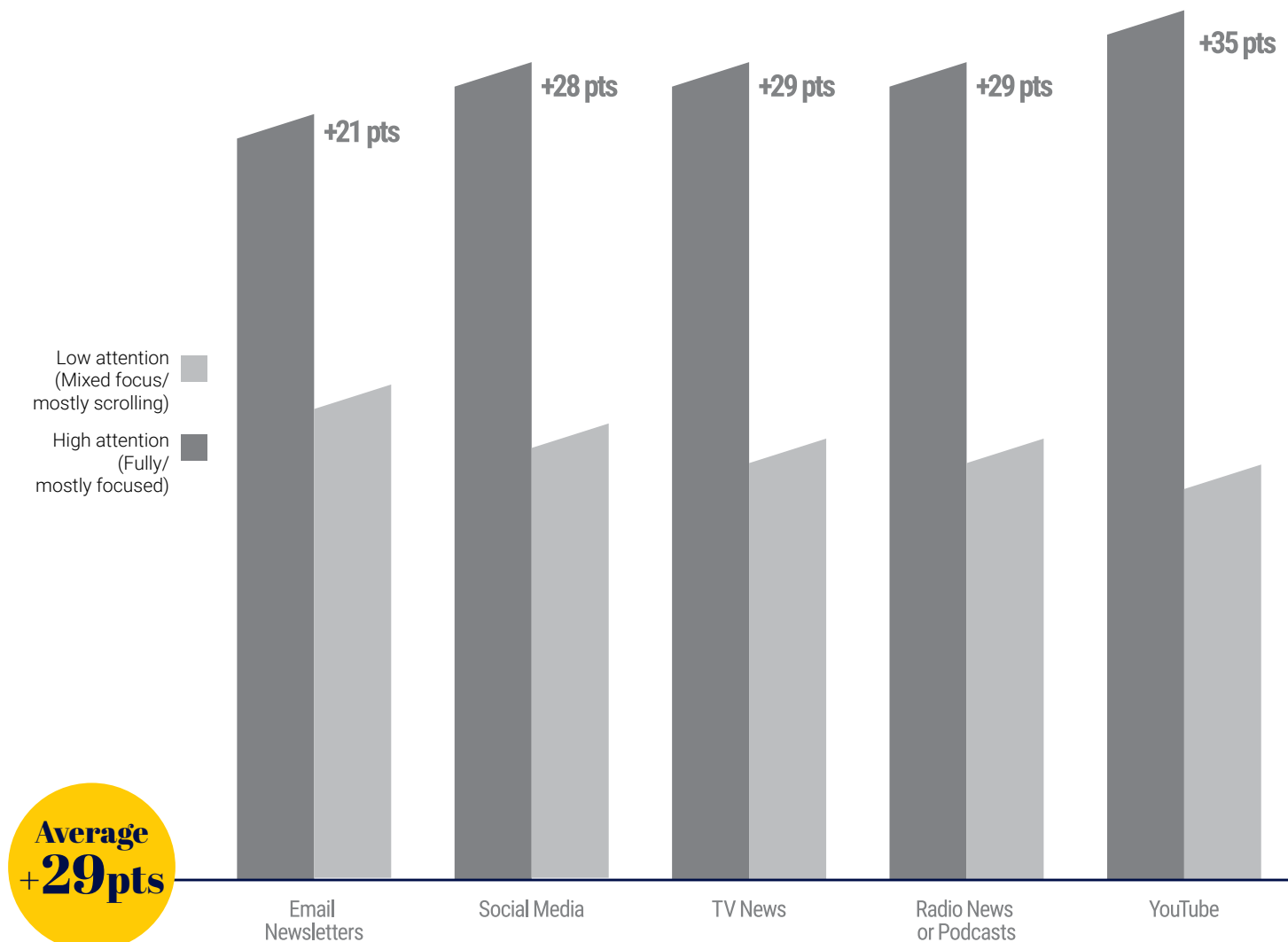
At least three in five adults say they are fully or mostly focused when catching up on the news.

Even though people look at many different sources of information throughout the day, they don't pay the same amount of attention to all of them. News channels get real, deep focus: at least three in five adults say they are fully or mostly focused when catching up on the news. Core channels – like news apps, websites and print – get the highest level of concentration, with an average of 65% of readers paying close attention.



Attention Level Paid to Different Media Types

Other Channels



Q. When consuming each of the following types of media, how do you usually engage with it?

Among all these options, news apps are the number-one channel for holding an audience’s attention. This gap is the largest recorded in the study, beating out TV news (+29 points), social media (+28 points) and email newsletters (+21 points). For advertisers, this shows that news apps offer a unique environment where audiences are engaged rather than passively browsing.

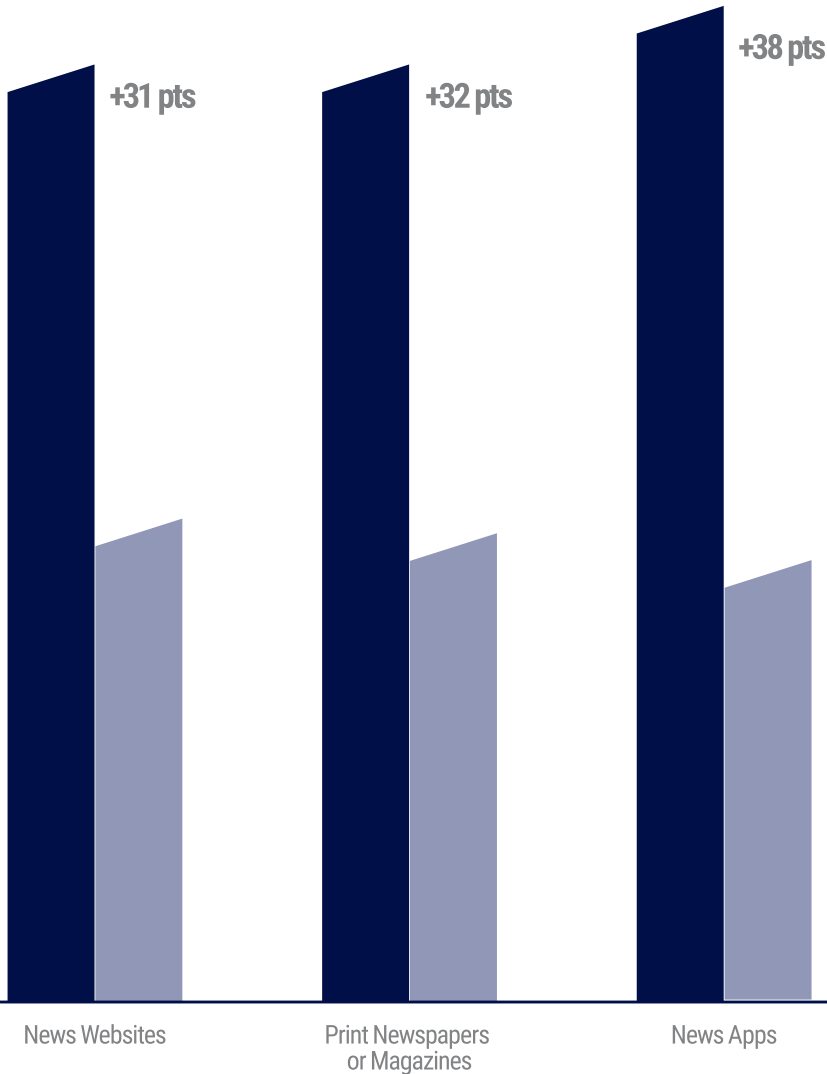
news apps are the
#1
channel for holding an
audience’s attention.

Core News Media Channels

News apps are the #1 high-attention channel, with 68% giving it fully or mostly focused attention, more than twice as many who consume with mixed focus or are mostly scrolling (30%).

- Low attention (Mixed focus/ mostly scrolling)
- High attention (Fully/ mostly focused)

Average
+34pts



#3 News Media Drives Real Action



When people find something interesting on a news site, they take real action.

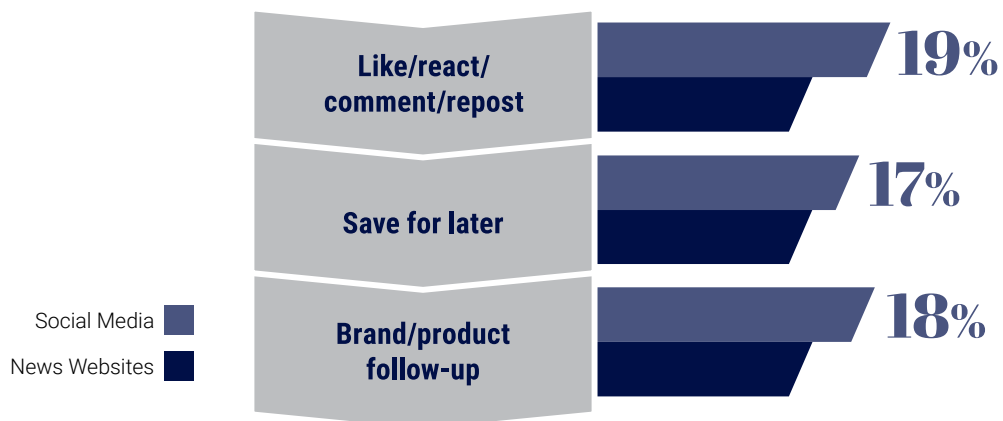
Because people pay closer attention to the news, it has a much bigger impact on what they do next. While other platforms are great for quick interactions like likes or shares, quality news leads when it comes to deeper, more meaningful behaviour.

When people find something interesting on a news site, they take real action: 20% read the full story, 20% search for more details, 18% check the facts and 16% use that information to make important decisions.

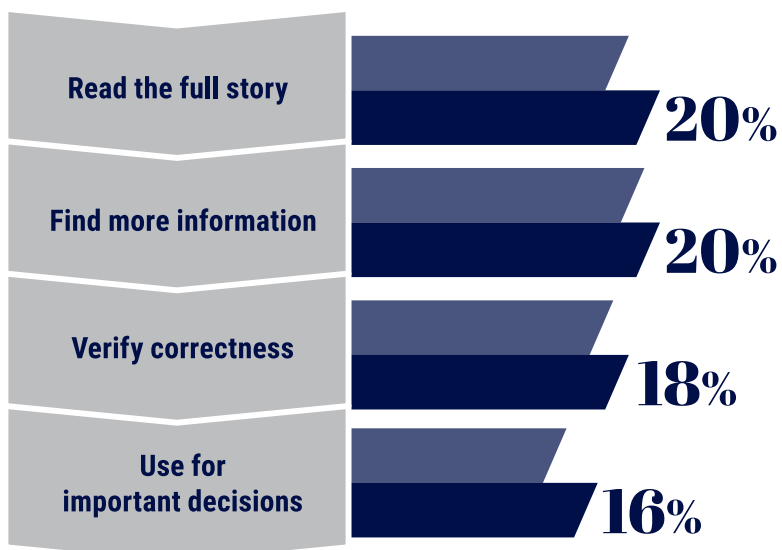


Actions taken after seeing interesting information on different platforms

Social Media Leads on Visible Engagement



News Websites Lead on Deeper Information Behaviours



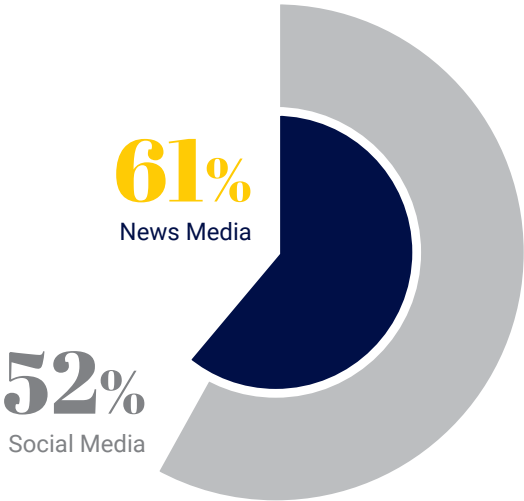
Q: When you see news, current affairs or information that interests you on each of the following sources, what do you usually do?

On top of that, quality news has real staying power. Some 61% of people say that articles and reports stick with them long after they finish reading. This memory lasts even longer with key audience groups.



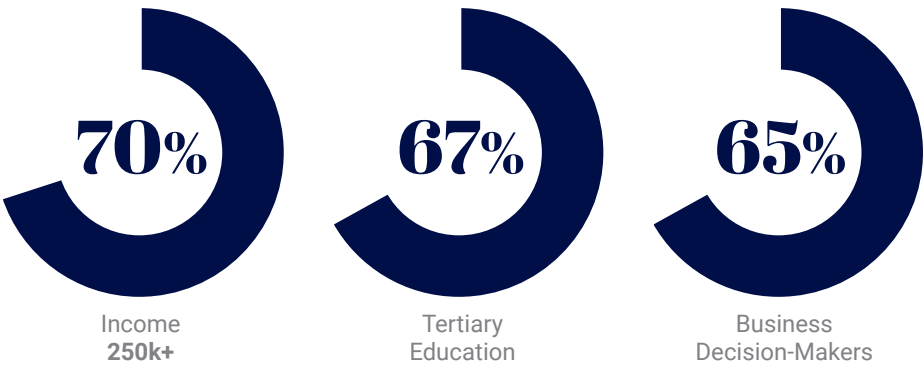
Quality journalism doesn't just inform people; it shapes their opinions and choices over time.

Staying Power of Different Media Types



The staying power of news rises to 65% for business decision-makers and 67% for university graduates, peaking at 70% for high earners making over HK\$250k per month. Quality journalism doesn't just inform people; it shapes their opinions and choices over time.

Staying Power of News Media



■ Quality journalism tends to stay with me after I see it

Q: Which statement describes you better, even if neither is exactly right?

#4 Trust, Focus and Indispensability



**Trusted news partnerships
systematically elevate
brand metrics.**

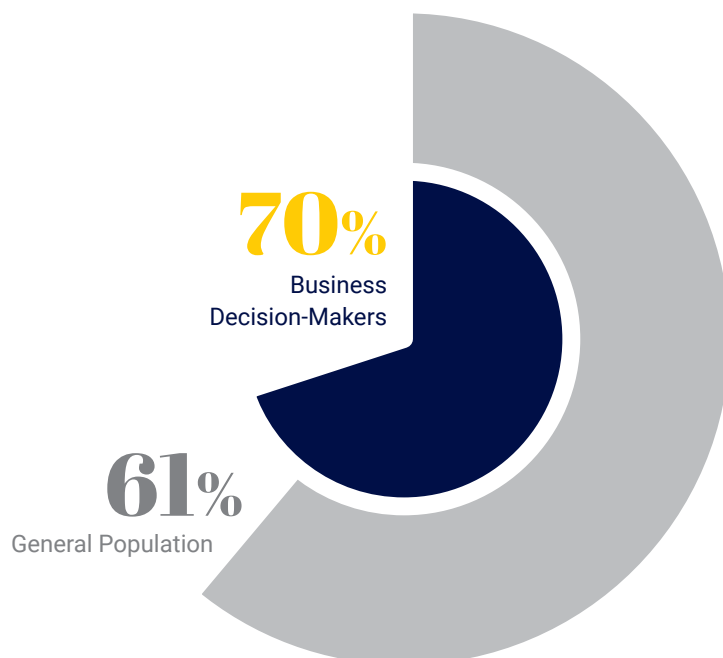
When evaluating the competitive landscape of major news brands, the SCMP uniquely stands out at the direct intersection of reader trust, full audience focus and brand indispensability.

Aligning with a highly trusted environment like the SCMP delivers a powerful brand halo for advertisers. The study highlights that 59% of the general public and an overwhelming 70% of business decision-makers feel significantly more positive about a brand that partners or advertises with a news source they trust.

These trusted news partnerships systematically elevate brand metrics, making the advertising company feel higher quality (63%), more credible (60%) and more worth considering (60%).



When a brand partners with a trusted news source, does it make you feel more or less positive about that brand?



Q: When a brand advertises or partners with a news source you trust, how does that usually affect your perception of the brand?

Because the SCMP ranks as the number one most trusted platform for accuracy and quality, and number one for brand focus, it has secured an essential role in the daily lives of its readers. The SCMP ranks first in brand indispensability as the single source readers say they would miss most if they suddenly lost access to it.



SCMP ranks as the number one most trusted platform for accuracy and quality.

How major news brands compare on reader trust, focus and indispensability



Q: For each of the news sources that you selected earlier, please select the degree to which you trust them for accurate, quality news

Q: When you use each of the following sources for news or information, how would you describe the attention you usually give it?

Q: Imagine that starting tomorrow, you could no longer access any of the news or information sources you currently use. Which one would you miss the most?

INFLUENCE READS SCMP.



“SCMP gives me the clarity I need to lead.”

CHRISTINA GAW, Managing Principal, Global Head of Capital Markets,
Co-Chair of Alternative Investments, Gaw Capital Partners

**Take your place
at the
intersection
of influence.**

**Work
with us.**



INFLUENCE THE INFLUENTIAL.