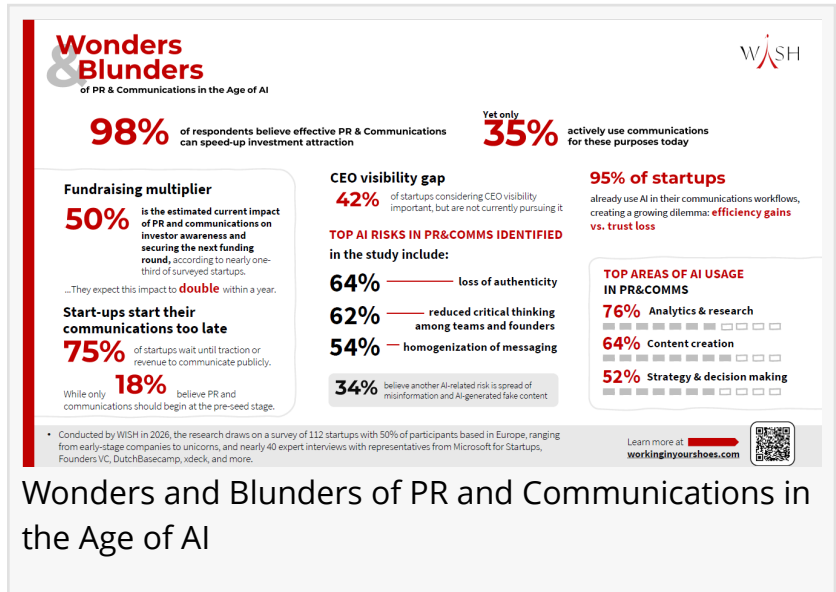


98% of Startup Leaders See PR as a Fundraising Multiplier - Yet Only 35% Use It That Way Today

It points to a shift from generating brand visibility to building credibility and trust, which become paramount in investment decision-making in the age of AI.

AMSTERDAM, NETHERLANDS,
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EINPresswire.com/ -- The new Wonders and Blunders of PR & Communications in the Age of AI report, led by Working in Your Shoes (WISH), finds that about 98% of respondents believe effective PR and communications can help startups attract investment faster. Yet only 35% actively use it for these purposes today.



Wonders and Blunders of PR and Communications in the Age of AI

The study draws on insights from more than 100 startups -from pre-seed companies to unicorns - and over 40 investors, media representatives and [startup](#) ecosystem experts across multiple countries. And it highlights a significant gap: nearly one-third of respondents estimate the current impact of PR and communications on investor awareness and securing the next funding round at up to 50%, and expect this impact to double within a year. Yet for the most part, startups see PR and communications as a means of increasing brand visibility rather than as a strategic way to raise funds and accelerate growth.

"Despite growing recognition of this function's role in fundraising, startups are still almost twice as likely to use it for brand visibility (68%) than for investor awareness and supporting funding rounds (44%)," said Marina Levina, Founder, WISH. "It is increasingly becoming a strategic business function that shapes investor confidence, growth, and most importantly, [trust](#)."

Credibility & Trust

Trust is emerging as a startup's most valuable asset, with genuine human connection and

independent third-party validation as its two essential pillars.

“For investors, relationships are sometimes even more important than for clients. Trust, consistency, and personal contact often determine whether a conversation continues or stops.” said Katharina Farkas, Founder & CEO, Study Space.

The study identifies independent media coverage as one of the strongest trust signals in the age of AI. Gianni Giacomelli, Founding Partner at kAlgentic, believes that traditional media drives credibility and financial media adds another layer of scrutiny.

As AI-generated content becomes increasingly homogeneous and abundant, and fake news become more sophisticated, credibility and trust are emerging as the new competitive capital and are shaping investment decisions more than ever before.

Uday Khanna, Co-founder, 1406 Park Lane Partners VC, highlights: “We believe the real work is finding founders before everyone else does. Communications play a crucial role in this and in tracking how they evolve over time. When founders keep us in the loop from day one — with regular updates and check-ins — it builds an additional layer of accountability and trust, and we feel part of their journey.”

Startup practices vs investors' expectations

The study highlights a significant gap between startups' PR and Communications practices and investors' expectations:

- 75% of startups wait until they have traction or revenue before communicating publicly, while investors and experienced founders advocate starting much earlier -at the idea stage. Only 18% believe PR and communications should begin at the pre-seed stage.
- 42% of startups say CEO visibility is important but are not currently pursuing it, despite investors using founder visibility to assess leadership, vision and credibility.

Growing dilemma: efficiency gains vs. trust loss

The research finds that up to 95% of startups are already using AI in their communications workflows. While AI offers clear benefits in speed and efficiency, respondents are increasingly concerned that over-reliance could lead to generic messaging, reduced critical thinking and the loss of authentic founder voices.

“We read hundreds of pitches a month at TFN, and it's clear within a sentence which ones were written by AI without a human checking them afterwards,” said Akansha Dimri, Founder & EIC at Tech Funding News. “The report's finding that founders rank loss of authenticity as their top AI risk exactly matches what we see from the media side. The founders who still get our attention

are the ones who clearly wrote the email themselves, or at least read it before it went out."

Top three risks of over-reliance on AI identified by Startups are:

- 64%—loss of personal touch and authenticity;
- 62%—loss of critical thinking;
- 54%—homogenization of messaging.

AI-agents era paradox

The erosion of critical thinking is particularly alarming as we enter the era of AI agents that increasingly participate in workflows, communications and decision-making. Experts interviewed for the report raised a broader question: how can companies embrace AI agents without losing human strategic thinking, oversight and authentic leadership?

"In the era of AI-agents, everyone is focused on what to do with AI. But the real question is what do we do with people." Gianni Giacomelli, Founding Partner, kAlgentic.

Human & AI: Finding the Right Balance

The report argues that the future of startup communications is human-led and AI-enabled - using AI to increase scale and efficiency, while keeping strategy, judgement, creativity and relationships firmly human.

"AI can't replace humans, but a human using AI can replace a human not using AI. The AI is just a tool," reinforced Alex Dowdalls, Founder of AXVECO, an AI scale-up.

Levina concludes: "The report's framework—Strategy, Measurability, AI mindset, Relationship-building and Transformation—can be summed up simply: use AI for speed and research, keep positioning and relationship-building human, and begin building credibility before you need investment, customers or media attention. By the time you need trust, it is too late to start building it."

Wonders and Blunders of PR & Communications in the Age of AI: Startup Founder's Playbook — Multiply Fundraising. Earn Trust. Avoid Pitfalls. is available from the 15th of September 2026. The full report is available at the following link:

<https://workinginyourshoes.com/page239767009.html>.

About the Research

The research was led by Working in Your Shoes (WISH) to better understand how startups can

use PR & communications strategically, leverage AI effectively and improve their chances of attracting investment. The study combines perspectives from startup founders, investors and media professionals to provide practical guidance for early-stage companies navigating an AI-driven communications landscape.

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