

CBR Readership Survey

The CBR surveyed its readers earlier this year to discover who they are and what they think about the magazine

Virginia A. Hulme

Last spring, the *China Business Review* (CBR) hired Illinois-based Research USA, Inc. to survey 1,000 CBR readers. Although the return was lower than in the 2004 survey (see the CBR, January–February 2005, p.46), responses were overwhelmingly positive. More than half of respondents were members of the US-China Business Council, the publisher of the CBR.

Who reads the CBR?

According to the survey results, CBR readers tend to be high-level executives with significant experience in China business—nearly three-quarters are at the director level or higher and about 45 percent have been involved in their organization's China business for 10 or more years (see Figures 1 and 2). Seventy-eight percent of respondents report that their primary office is in the United States, while 17 percent say it is in China. More than half of respondents also have responsibility for Asian countries other than China.

Not surprisingly, CBR readers are frequent travelers, with about 45 percent making 5–14 trips per year. Three-quarters of respondents travel to China, but Europe, Hong Kong, the United States, Singapore, Japan, and Canada are also frequent destinations.

More than one-third of respondents work for manufacturers, with another 27 percent in legal and business services. The rest are scattered across sectors such as finance, medical, education, and retail and wholesale (see Figure 3). Nearly three-quarters of respondents note that, compared to markets in other regions of the world, the China market is “very important” to their organization's overall business, with another 24 percent saying that it is “somewhat important” (see Figure 4). On average, respondents' organizations employ 1,412 people in China.

Reading habits

Respondents read the CBR regularly, with nearly three-quarters reading three out of four issues and the same per-

centage reading half or more of each issue. The average reader spends 55 minutes with each issue.

Forty percent saves the entire issue for reference, while another third passes copies on to others. Roughly one-quarter saves articles of interest. In total, each copy has about three readers.

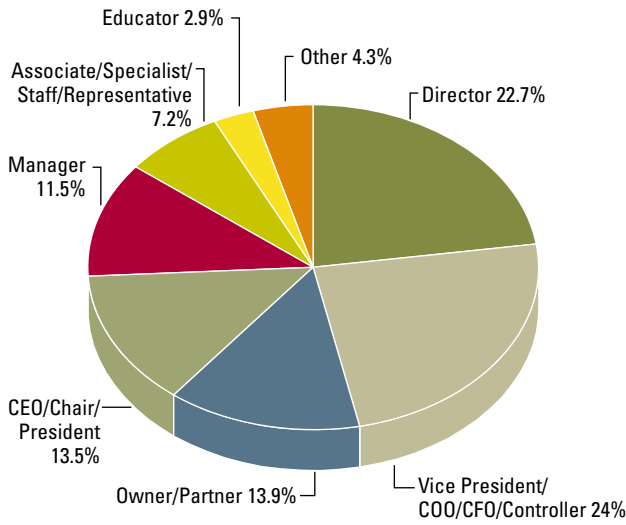
Why do they read the magazine?

More than 90 percent of respondents find the CBR either “very useful” or “somewhat useful” as a source of information for their business. Specifically, 86 percent read it to keep abreast of the latest developments, 61 percent to gain insight into the thinking of US and PRC leaders, 47 percent to aid in long-term strategic planning, and 40 percent to learn about market opportunities (see Figure 5). More than 80 percent of respondents have a “strong” or “moderate” interest in reading about government relations, legal issues, intellectual property rights, economy, and politics (see Table). More than half of respondents have “little” or “no” interest in reading about raw materials and telecommunications and information technology. In general, readers would like to see more coverage of the environment, distribution and transportation, healthcare reform and pharmaceuticals, entrepreneurs and small businesses, financial services, government relations and politics, the impact of the 2008 Olympics, and currency issues.

Favorite parts of the magazine

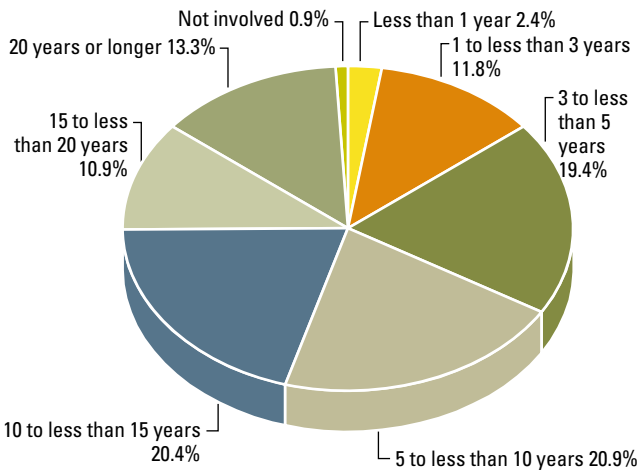
The focus, features, and China Business sections of the magazine garnered strong or moderate interest from more than 90 percent of respondents. Other popular departments include China Data, Critical Eye, USCBC Bulletin, and Short Takes. Readers expressed less interest in Book Reviews and China Conference Calendar. Nearly two-thirds of respondents would welcome a brief column on business culture tips, and more than 40 percent would like to see brief columns on executive travel in China and new technology and business products. Only 30 percent would like to see a column on Chinese language.

Figure 1: An Executive Readership: Respondents' Positions



Source: Research USA, Inc.

Figure 2: Length of China Experience



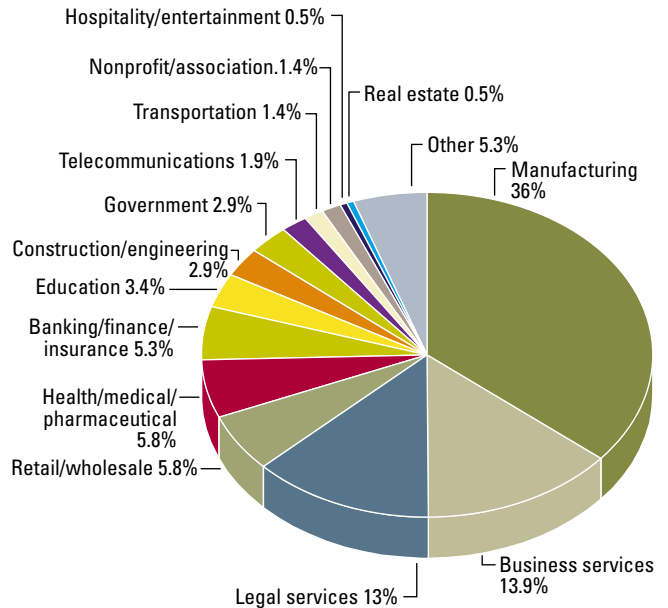
Source: Research USA, Inc.

CBR on the web

Only half of respondents have visited the *CBR* website. Of these, more than 60 percent review archived articles, while 55 percent print articles to read later. About one-third go online to e-mail articles, and one-fifth renew their subscriptions online.

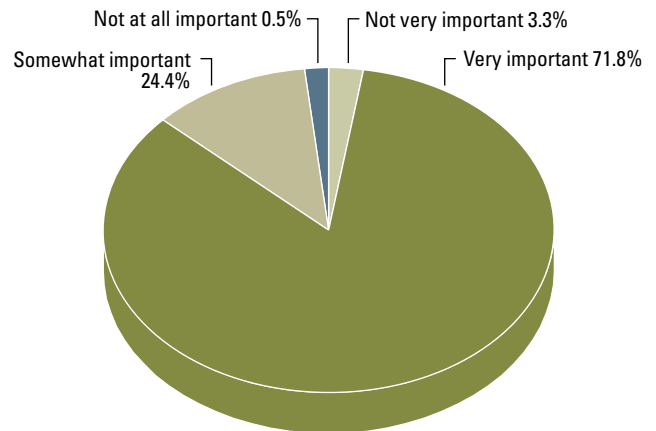
The vast majority of respondents found current and archived articles “very” or “somewhat” valuable. About 60 percent found the China Conference Calendar and the US-China Business Services Directory “very” or “somewhat” valuable, indicating that the online version of China Conference Calendar may be more useful than the

Figure 3: Readers Are Spread across Sectors



Source: Research USA, Inc.

Figure 4: Importance of the China Market to Respondents' Companies



Source: Research USA, Inc.

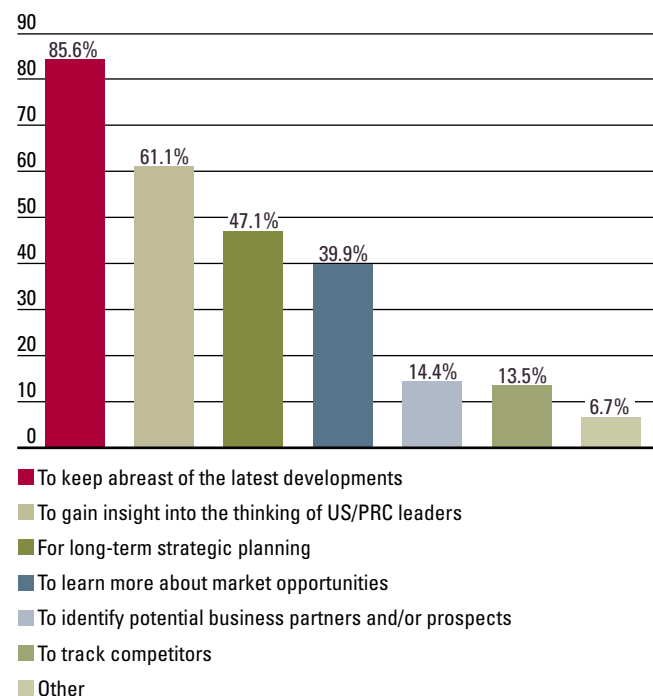
print version. Seventy percent found the search engine valuable, while only 30 percent showed interest in the online store.

The competition

Despite the widely reported trend of shrinking readerships for print magazines and newspapers, most respondents still get their China business information from print magazines, newspapers, and trade publications.

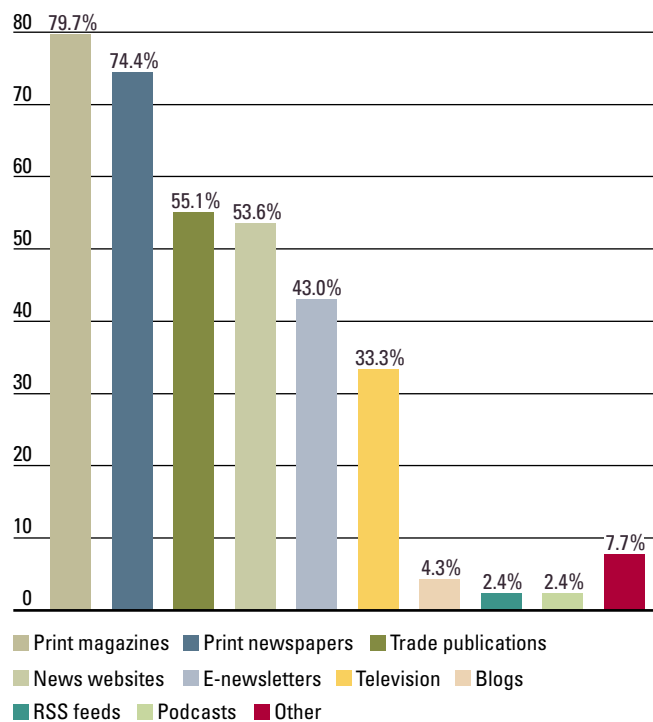
Virginia A. Hulme is the editor of the CBR.

Figure 5: Why Do You Read the *CBR*?



Note: Respondents could choose more than one reason.
Source: Research USA, Inc.

Figure 6: Preferred Sources of China Business Information



Note: Respondents could choose more than one reason.
Source: Research USA, Inc.

Table 1: Topics of Interest to *CBR* Readers (%)

	Strong interest	Moderate interest	Little interest	No interest
Corporate administration/general management	26.9	49.2	18.3	5.6
Government relations	54.3	35.0	9.2	1.5
Investment in China/import/export	47.3	33.7	16.6	2.4
Legal issues	41.4	40.5	16.1	2.0
Manufacturing	35.0	38.8	20.4	5.8
Human resources	22.3	48.5	22.3	6.9
Intellectual property rights	42.0	40.5	14.0	3.5
Standards	22.1	48.3	25.1	4.5
Transparency	21.3	49.7	24.9	4.1
Raw materials	13.9	30.8	39.9	15.4
Telecom & information technology	18.3	24.3	43.0	14.4
Transportation/logistics/distribution/retailing	27.4	41.7	24.9	6.0
Sales & marketing	26.8	46.4	18.7	8.1
Economy	54.0	38.8	6.2	1.0
Politics	51.7	36.8	9.1	2.4

Source: Research USA, Inc.

Methodology

The 1,000 names selected to receive the survey were taken from the *CBR*'s circulation list on an nth name basis. Every selected name was mailed an advance notice postcard from John Frisbie, president of the US-China Business Council (publisher of the *CBR*), to inform them of the survey and request their cooperation. Each name was mailed a four-page questionnaire, a cover letter from the *CBR*, a one-dollar bill incentive, and a stamped return envelope. Nonrespondents were mailed another copy of the questionnaire, along with a cover letter from Research USA, Inc. and a stamped return envelope. In total, 214 completed questionnaires were returned out of a net effective mailing of 991—for a return rate of 21.6 percent.

—Research USA, Inc.

Nevertheless, new media is gaining influence—more than half get China business information from news websites, 43 percent from e-newsletters, and 33 percent from television. Only a small percentage turns to blogs, RSS feeds, or podcasts for China business information (see Figure 6).

Nearly two-thirds of *CBR* readers also peruse the *Wall Street Journal* or its sister publication, the *Wall Street Journal Asia*; more than half read the *Economist*. More than 40 percent read the *New York Times*, and more than one-third the *Financial Times*. Roughly one-quarter reviews Chinese newspapers and periodicals, the *Washington Post*, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, and/or the *China Economic Review*.

Staying relevant

Like other print publications, the *CBR* faces the daunting challenge of retaining readers' interest in a diverse media environment. Though the *CBR* is fortunate to have a core, loyal readership, the magazine strives not only to

satisfy these long-term readers of the magazine but to attract readers new to China business. As always, our goal is to provide thoughtful, in-depth, and engaging content on the issues facing companies doing business in and with China.

Since the last *CBR* readership survey, we have introduced three new online features: China Business Directory, a business-to-business directory for the US-China business community; China Conference Calendar, which features upcoming China-related conferences and trade shows; and Travel Savvy, which highlights China-related flight and hotel deals. In coming months, we plan to beef up online content, as well as introduce a new department in the print magazine that features USCBC analysis.

Readers who did not receive the survey and would like to share their views on the magazine and its website are welcome to contact us at publications@uschina.org. 完

CBR readers tend to be high-level executives with significant experience in China business—nearly three-quarters are at the director level or higher and about 45 percent have been involved in their organization's China business for 10 or more years.

Views on USCBC Membership Benefits

Nearly 60 percent of survey respondents work for companies that are members of the US-China Business Council (USCBC), publisher of the *China Business Review (CBR)*. (Member companies receive the magazine as a membership benefit.) The survey asked these readers their opinion on various USCBC membership services.

On the whole, the USCBC seems to be serving its members well. A whopping 88 percent found USCBC research and analysis on PRC and US regulatory and policy changes "very" or "somewhat" valuable, while an impressive 84 percent

and 80 percent rated the *CBR* and USCBC advocacy in China and the United States, respectively, as "very" or "somewhat" valuable. Between 60 and 80 percent found the USCBC's practical operating information, major conferences in the United States and China, smaller meetings, the website, and the members-only weekly e-newsletter, *China Market Intelligence*, "very" or "somewhat" valuable.

On the other hand, nearly one-third of respondents thought that USCBC's conference and advocacy papers were of little or no value. About one-quarter of respondents rated major conferences in

the United States and China, the USCBC website, *Washington Update*, *China News Headlines*, and best practices papers as being not very valuable.

In their comments, some respondents indicated they were unaware of all of USCBC's membership offerings. Several called for more programming outside of Washington, DC, while others would like to see more industry-specific information. The USCBC will take these views—both positive and negative—into account as it plans for 2008.

—Virginia A. Hulme