

# Safeguarding Supply Chain Reputation

2024 Benchmark Report

*2022-2024 Analysis*

# Key Takeaways

The media remains sensitive to potential supply chain shocks, even after the effects of the pandemic fade.

Corporate communicators need to highlight steps being taken to support a more resilient supply chain structure.

- 1 The pandemic has left the public wary around supply chain disruptions.** Strain on the supply chain has trended below historical averages for over a year. Yet supply shocks have generated news spikes comparable to those during the pandemic.
- 2 Play up global supply chain diversification.** As global tensions mount across the world, the media is placing the spotlight on supply chain reliance on China. Announcing plans to diversify can hedge against mounting media risk.
- 3 Consumer-facing and Defense companies are more exposed on supply disruptions.** The Automotive, Food & Beverage, and Defense industries see outsized media attention during a supply chain crisis.
- 4 Put supplier partnership agreements at the forefront of your response strategy.** They can create confidence in the company's long-term growth prospects. CEO commentary can further amplify messaging around these announcements.

# The media continues to frame the supply chain as fragile, despite improved conditions since the pandemic.

The GSCPI measures supply chain strain. Values below zero on this index indicate that supply chain pressure is lower than the monthly averages since 1997. **Since the pandemic, the GSCPI has generally trended below this historical average.**

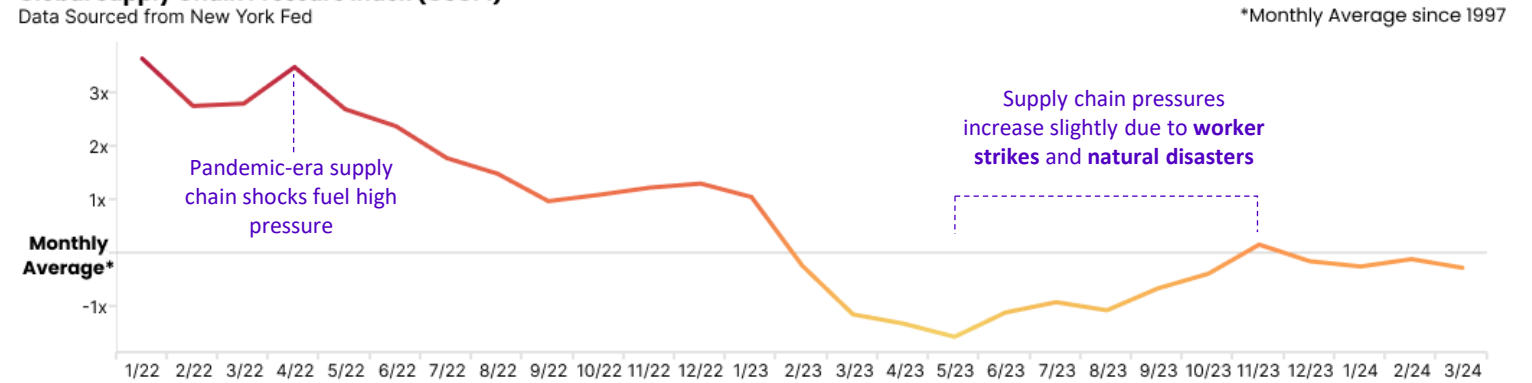
**The media remains sensitive to supply chain shocks,** with news of such shocks resulting in heightened coverage in Q3 2023. Examples are noted on the charts to the right. The GSCPI trended near zero in this period, indicating pressures were near the historical average. Yet coverage rose by over 100%, returning to pandemic levels.

**Memories of pandemic-related supply chain disruptions continue to fuel fears.** Nearly **one-third** of supply chain stories published since June 2023 referenced the pandemic.

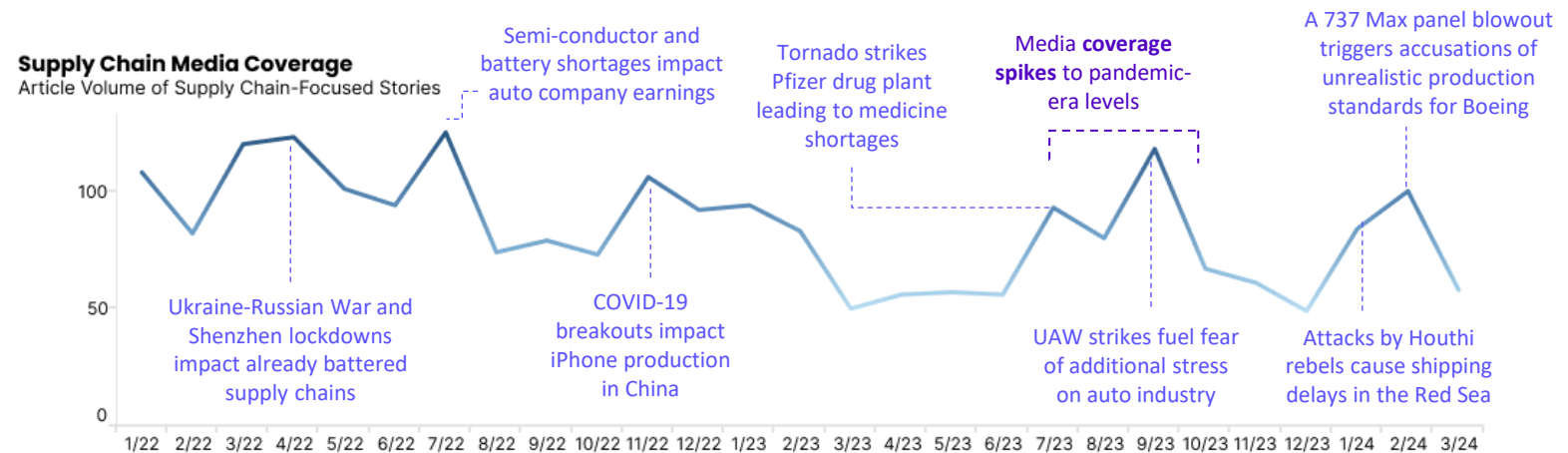
**What this means:** Persistent supply chain issues throughout the pandemic have left the media wary of supply chain disruptions, despite supply chain pressures falling below historical averages for over a year. Be prepared to respond to coverage.

**Relationship between Supply Chain Pressure and Media Reporting**  
Q1 2022-Q1 2024

**Global Supply Chain Pressure Index (GSCPI)**  
Data Sourced from New York Fed



**Supply Chain Media Coverage**  
Article Volume of Supply Chain-Focused Stories



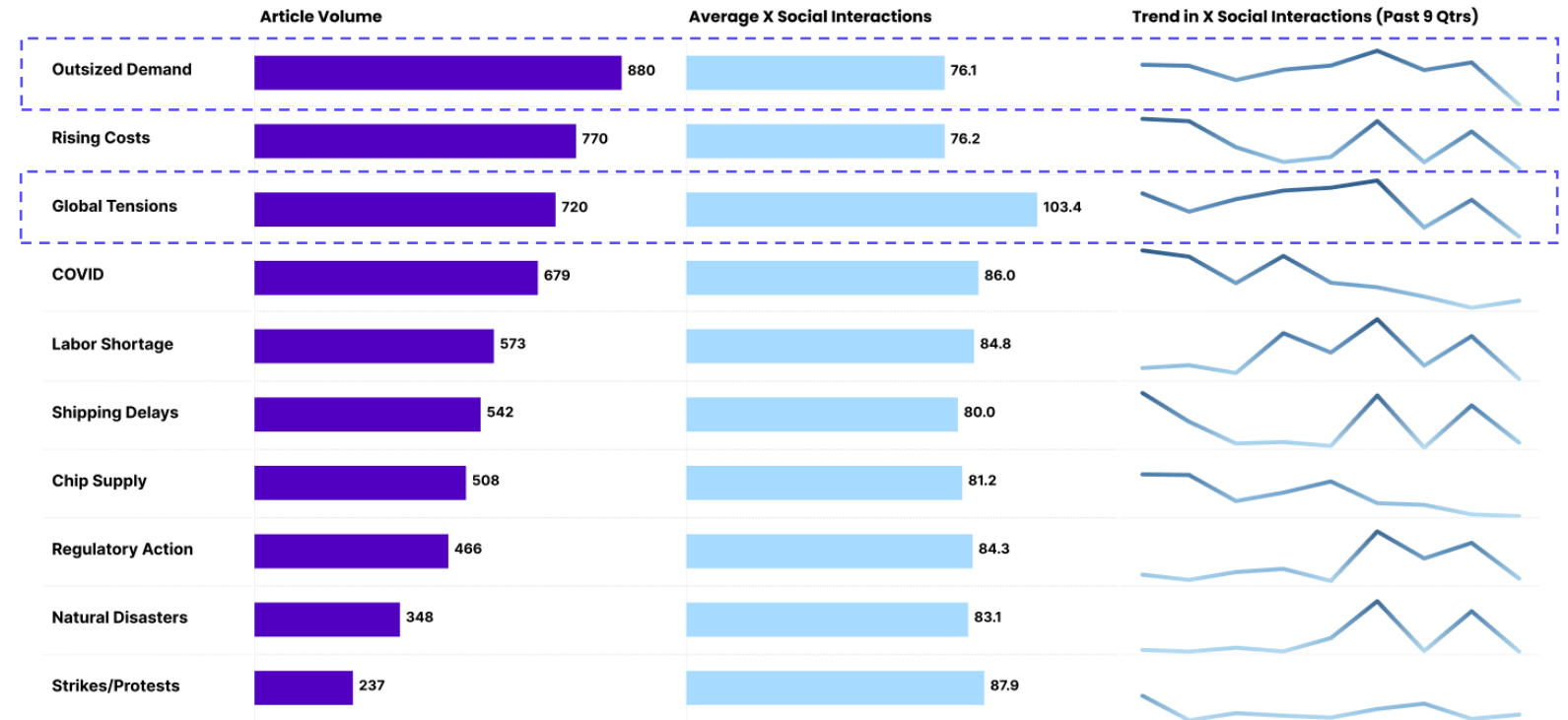
# Supply chain stories on Outsized Demand and Global Tensions saw the most consistent engagement over time.

**Outsized consumer demand was the leading theme in supply chain coverage.** This trend suggests that as long as consumer demand remains high, communicators should prepare for increased scrutiny on supply chain performance.

**Global tensions outpaced other topics in average social engagement.** Risk from involvement in **China featured prominently** in these stories. Apple has consistently made headlines with their strategy to diversify their production lines to Vietnam and India.

**What this means:** Scrutiny on supply chain performance highlights the importance of transparent and proactive comms strategies. Meanwhile, with the media positioning dependency on China as a threat to supply chain resiliency, there's an opportunity to play up global supply chain diversification. Outline plans to diversify your global supply channels to make your supply chain strategy more visible.

**Themes within Supply Chain-Focused Stories**  
Q1 2022-Q1 2024



# Supply shocks have an outsized impact on the Defense, Automotive, and Food & Beverage industries.

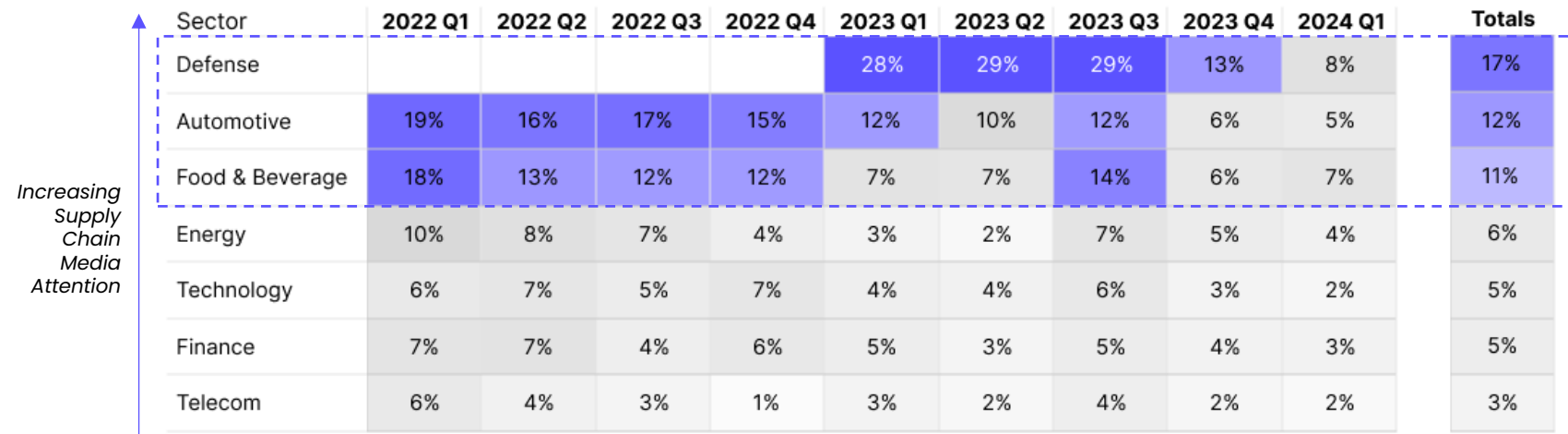
**Global conflicts create a unique challenge for the Defense supply chain.** For much of 2023, nearly **one-third** of all Defense coverage featured the supply chain; outsized demand from global conflicts exposed gaps in the industry’s manufacturing process. While coverage has declined, ongoing tensions may lead to further media criticism.

**Consumer-facing industries, particularly Automotive and Food/Beverage, experienced the most media pressure during disruptions.** Car and food prices were often used as a barometer for wider economic, keeping supply chain issues in the public eye.

**What this means:** The Defense, Automotive, and Food/Beverage industries see more media exposure during supply chain shocks. Communicators in these industries need to be ready to respond quickly to reassure stakeholders.

## Supply Chain Impact on Tracked Sectors

Total Supply Chain Media Mentions as a Percentage of Overall Sector Media Mentions



Sector	2022 Q1	2022 Q2	2022 Q3	2022 Q4	2023 Q1	2023 Q2	2023 Q3	2023 Q4	2024 Q1	Totals
Defense					28%	29%	29%	13%	8%	17%
Automotive	19%	16%	17%	15%	12%	10%	12%	6%	5%	12%
Food & Beverage	18%	13%	12%	12%	7%	7%	14%	6%	7%	11%
Energy	10%	8%	7%	4%	3%	2%	7%	5%	4%	6%
Technology	6%	7%	5%	7%	4%	4%	6%	3%	2%	5%
Finance	7%	7%	4%	6%	5%	3%	5%	4%	3%	5%
Telecom	6%	4%	3%	1%	3%	2%	4%	2%	2%	3%

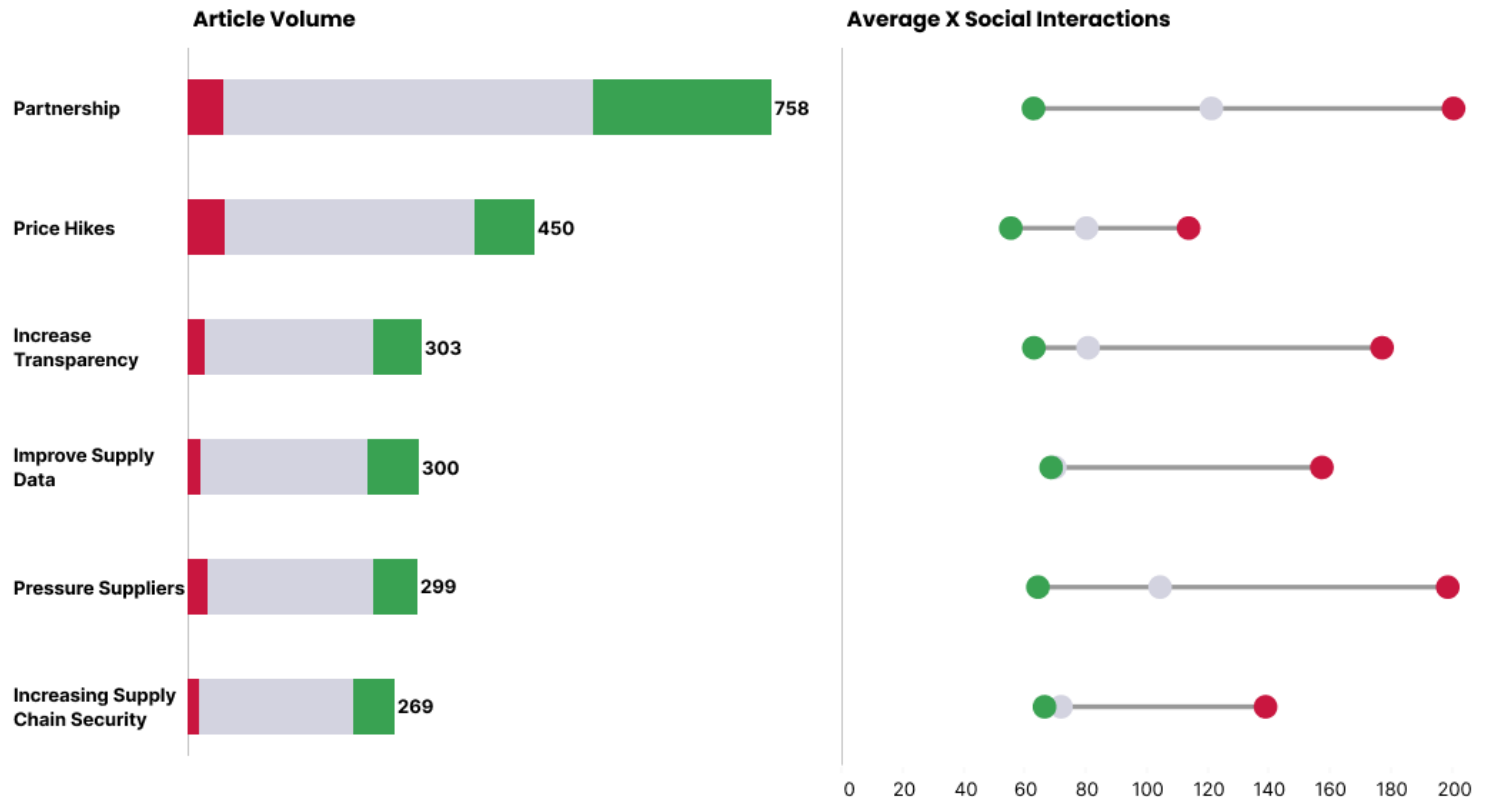
# Supplier partnership announcements can create confidence in long-term supply chain strategy.

While only **10%** of reporting on short-term disruption responses were negative, that negativity was highly shared. Negativity stemmed from resurfacing existing challenges with the supply chain. Writers often portrayed the actual response strategy more objectively.

**Most companies underscore long-term growth with messaging on new supplier partnerships.** Announcing these deals held a sizable lead in response strategy mentions. Nearly a third of all stories were positive, while negativity was relatively low. The strategy allowed communicators to frame supply chain issues as temporary, emphasizing long-term growth potential. Highly shared favorable messaging emphasized production target dates and diversification of supply lines.

**What this means:** Supply chain disruptions can drive outsized negativity. Where possible, announce long-term supply investments, especially supplier partnerships. These strategies can shift attention away from short-term issues to future growth potential.

**Company Responses to Supply Chain Disruptions**  
Supply Chain-Focused Stories; Q1 2022 - Q1 2024

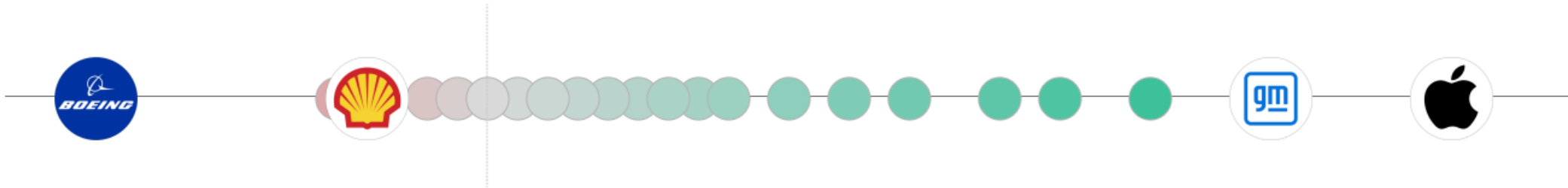


# Successful supply chain responses play up steps to minimize future risk.

Companies need to show that they're building a more robust supply chain in the long-term even as they work to meet existing demand.

## How the Media Portrayed Companies facing Supply Chain Challenges

Net Tone of Companies that appeared in Supply Chain-Focused Mentions



**Boeing** had the most **negative** net media tone. The plane manufacturer contended with high demand and parts shortages. In response, they increased their production targets to meet demand. The media ultimately blamed this strategy for supplier quality issues after a string of safety incidents involving their planes.



**Apple** had the most **positive** net media tone. The company was exposed to geopolitical risk and pandemic slowdowns in China. In response, the company signaled in mid-2022 it would move production to new countries like Vietnam and India. It has since been hailed as trendsetter in global supply chain diversification.



**Shell** faced high **negative** net media tone. The company faced a media crisis in early 2022 in the wake of the Russia-Ukraine war. The media blasted Shell for purchasing Russian oil as companies across globe announced their divesture from the region. The company quickly apologized but faced criticism for suggesting there were no alternatives.



**GM** had a strong **positive** net media tone. US automakers struggled to keep up with global electric vehicle competition due to supply chain constraints. In response, CEO Mary Barra outlined a playbook for long-term growth. She promoted major partnerships and infrastructure investments that would secure access to battery minerals and computer chips needed for EVs.

# CEO commentary can result in greater visibility around your supply chain strategy.

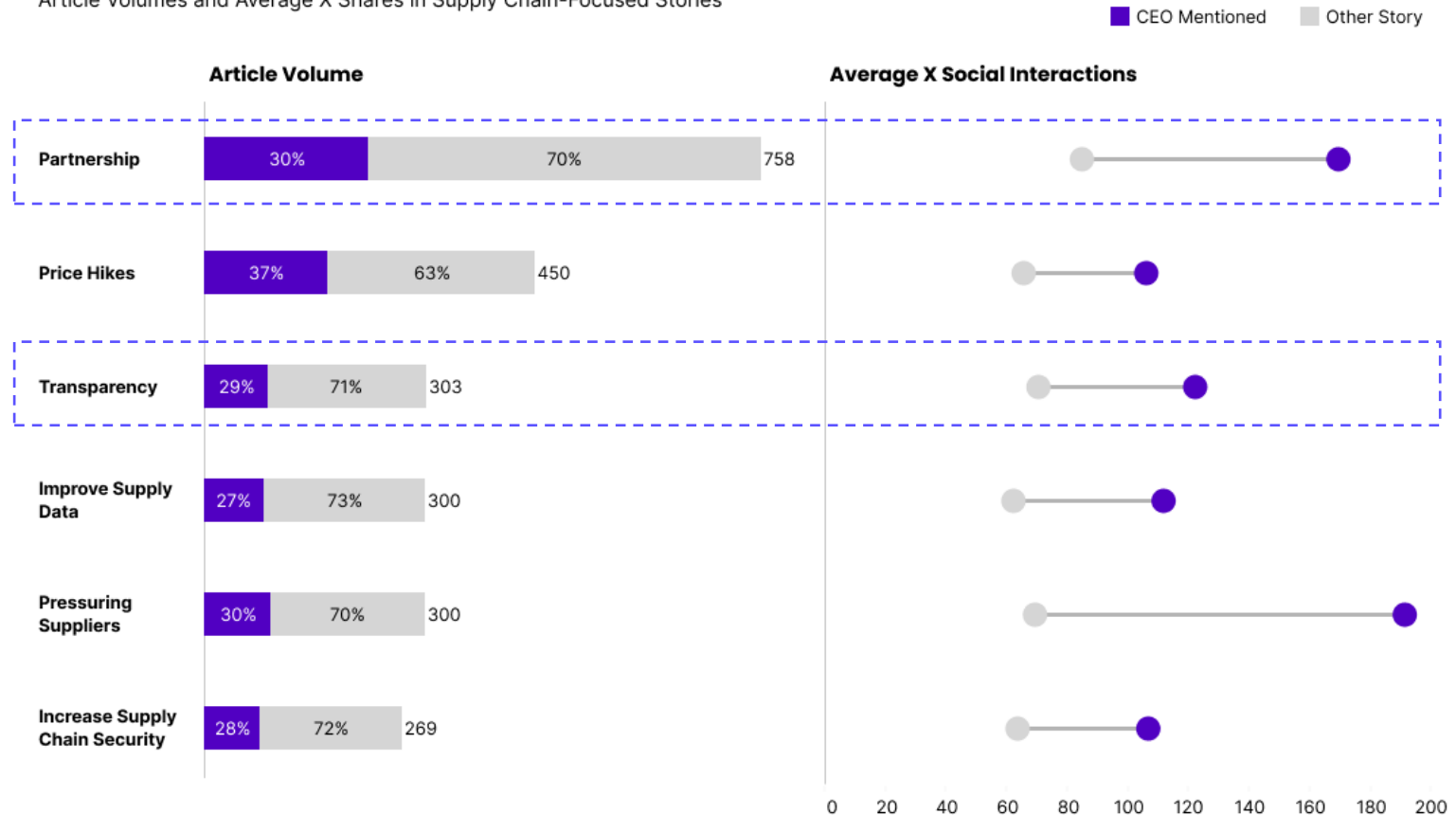
**CEO appearances are a critical tool in driving media visibility.** CEOs appeared in about **30%** of all supply chain response coverage, yet their stories saw higher social interactions on average across all response types.

New partnership announcements generated **2x more sharing on average** when featuring the CEO, and new developments around these deals often resurfaced quotes from executives.

**Pressuring suppliers to meet short-term targets carries risk and reward.** Stories about ramping up production in the face of disruptions saw more engagement when an executive was featured. These stories signaled confidence to stakeholders that the business could meet quotas. But undue pressure can also drive product quality or workplace issues. Those carry additional reputational risks.

**What this means:** CEO statements can amplify your supply chain media strategy. Having executives announce new supplier deals can improve future outlooks. Pressure on manufactures can build short term momentum but may carry risk for CEOs.

**Impact of CEOs in Supply Chain Messaging**  
Article Volumes and Average X Shares in Supply Chain-Focused Stories

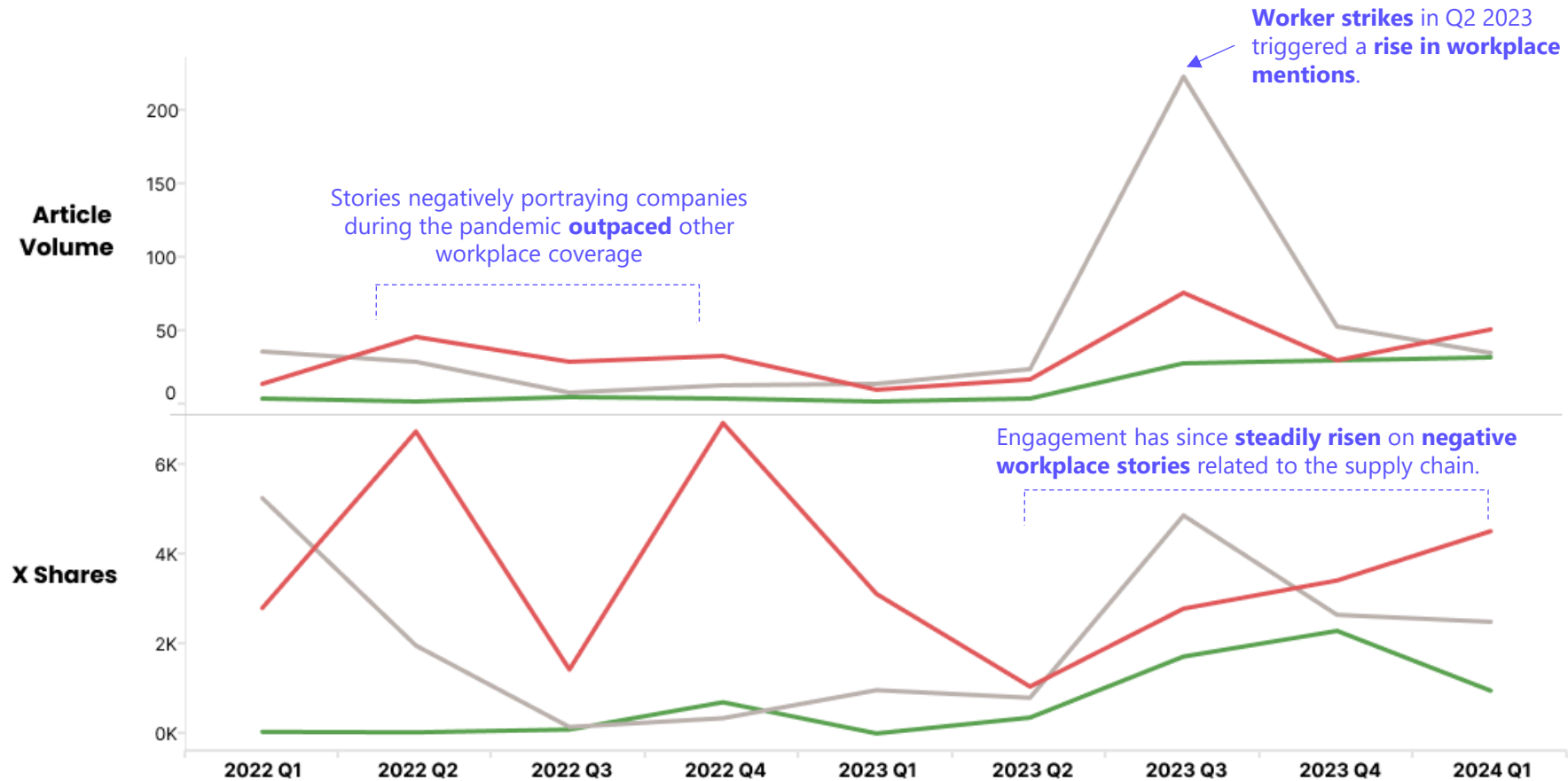




# Pressuring labor forces to meet production targets comes with reputational risks.

Expect demand for high labor productivity to be met criticism of workplace culture and compensation. It could erupt into further disruptions to production.

**Supply Chain-Focused Coverage centered on Workplace Themes**



# Methodology

PublicRelay utilizes a human-technology hybrid approach to extract key messages, topic relationships, and sentiment from unstructured text.

Using this approach, PublicRelay analyzed the earned media of **36 major companies across 7 sectors**. Companies in each sector were chosen based on a combination of factors including firm market capitalization and knowledge of each sector's media landscape.

For each company, PublicRelay analyzed **over 50+ reputational topics across 6 dimensions**. Other company characteristics tracked included CEOs, spokespeople, products, and trending topics. Each topic was associated with a company, and each company/topic association received a distinct sentiment (positive, neutral, negative).

To standardize company comparisons, **the media analysis was limited to 50 of the most prominent global publications**. These publications were chosen based on a variety of factors analyzed from over a decade's worth of PublicRelay's client data, factoring in readership size, global presence, balance in perspective, and publication frequency.

To guarantee media relevance, PublicRelay only analyzed earned media where at least one company was mentioned 3+ times in the article text or was mentioned in the article title.

To ensure measurement precision, PublicRelay only analyzed articles from their original publication source. An article's syndication across multiple publications was grouped with the original published article.

# Companies Tracked

Automotive	Defense	Energy	Finance	Food & Beverage	Technology	Telecom
Ford	Boeing	BP	Bank of America	Coca-Cola	Amazon	AT&T
GM	General Dynamics	Chevron	BlackRock	Diageo	Apple	Comcast
Tesla	Lockheed Martin	ConocoPhillips	Citigroup	Kraft Heinz	Google	T-Mobile
Toyota	Northrop Grumman	Exxon	Goldman Sachs	Mondelez	Microsoft	Verizon
Volkswagen	Raytheon	Shell	JPMorgan Chase	PepsiCo	Meta	Charter/Spectrum
			Wells Fargo			

# Publications Analyzed

ABC  
Al Jazeera  
Associated Press  
Australian Financial Review  
Barron's  
BBC  
Bloomberg  
Business Day Nigeria  
Business Insider  
Business Standard  
CBC  
CBS  
CNBC  
CNN  
Fast Company  
Financial Post  
Forbes  
Fortune  
Fox Business

Fox News  
Hindu Business Line  
Los Angeles Times  
MSNBC  
National Post  
NBC News  
New York Times  
Nikkei  
Nikkei Asian Review  
NPR  
Politico  
Reuters  
South China Morning Post  
Straits Times  
Sydney Morning Herald  
TechCrunch  
The Atlantic  
The Economist  
The Guardian

The Hill  
The National  
The Telegraph  
Time  
Times of India  
Toronto Star  
U.S. News & World Report  
USA Today  
Wall Street Journal  
Washington Post  
WIRED

# About PublicRelay

PublicRelay is the most trusted media monitoring and analytics solution for communications and marketing professionals at the world's most recognizable consumer and business brands, associations, universities, and government agencies.

Our clients confidently use our media analysis to plan and measure influencer engagement, reputation management, competitive landscape, and message pull through. Known for its innovation, superior data quality, and actionable insights, PublicRelay helps communicators not only understand what they have done but what to do next.



