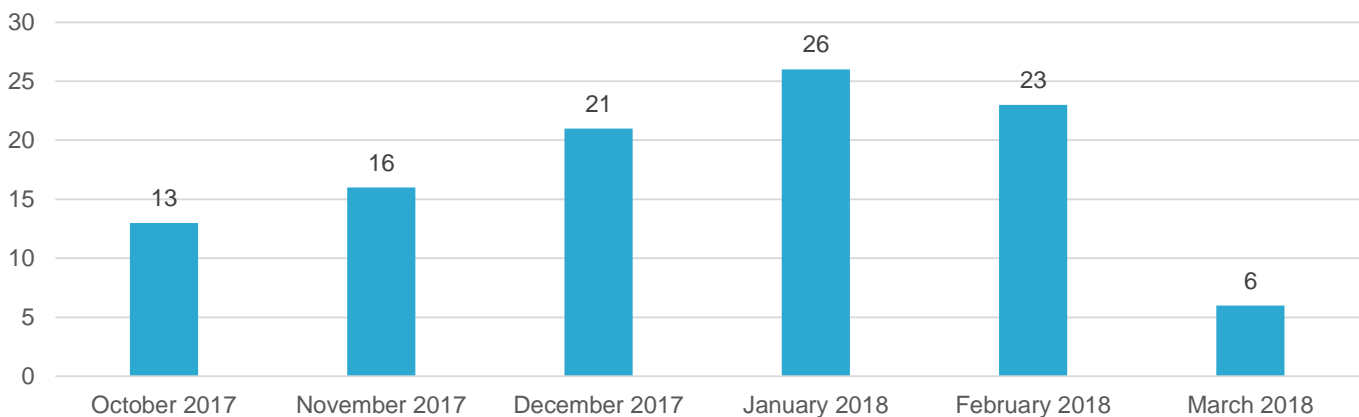


BUSINESS RESPONSE TO SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE AND THE #METOO MOVEMENT

This report marks the seventh in Weber Shandwick's series exploring business reactions to prominent social issues. The latest example of corporate activism arose from the October 2017 exposés of film producer Harvey Weinstein, investigations by [The New York Times](#) and [The New Yorker](#) that uncovered decades of sexual harassment allegations. The widespread backlash ultimately culminated in the #MeToo movement. The hashtag encouraged victims of sexual harassment to speak out on social media around the world.

Weber Shandwick began tracking corporate responses on October 10, the same day The New Yorker first published its allegations and five days after the article from The New York Times. As of March 21, 2018, we collected responses from 105 companies that have publicly discussed sexual harassment. The responses peaked in January 2018, nearly three months after the start of #MeToo.

Responses by Month
(# responses)



Of the 105 companies that issued responses through March 21, 2018...

- + **12%** are U.S. Fortune 500 companies
- + **21%** are media sector companies, followed by **19%** tech, **17%** financials and **11%** business services
- + **25%** of companies had prior allegations of harassment
- + **43%** issued statements to the media, followed by internal employee memos (**11%**), conferences (**10%**) and blog posts (**10%**). Twitter hosted the most responses of the social media outlets (**7%**), followed by LinkedIn (**6%**) and Facebook (**1%**).
- + **24%** also issued an executive-authored response via byline, blog or LinkedIn post
- + **60%** of spokespeople were female executives
- + **82%** are headquartered in Blue states (leaned Democratic in the 2016 presidential election), while just **10%** are headquartered in Red states (leaned Republican in the 2016 presidential election). **8%** are international
- + **86%** had a CEO (or equivalent) as spokesperson

In terms of the content...

- + **1%** called for legislative action
- + **11%** referred to Lean In's #MentorHer movement in their response, a call to preserve male mentorship of women in the wake of #MeToo backlash
- + **15%** included the speaker's personal experience with harassment, a practice more common among female executives
- + **40%** discussed their own company's practices, specifically mentioning training and reporting procedures and other company policies
- + **43%** referred to the #MeToo movement in their response
- + **55%** discussed harassment as a byproduct of poor workplace culture
 - o Improved inclusiveness and diversity initiatives were widely heralded as a solution to this issue
- + **100%** condemned sexual harassment

INSIGHTS:

1) Take the time for a more thoughtful response. The majority of companies issued detailed responses too nuanced for a single Tweet. Instead, companies issued more long form responses in conference appearances, blog posts, and letters to employees and customers.

2) The tone does not have to be negative. Sexual harassment is an extremely serious issue, but responses don't have to be dispiriting. Many companies created positive messages by pledging to support female employees and create more diverse workplaces.

3) Executive status counts. This study has the highest percentage of CEO respondents of all the events Weber Shandwick has tracked. Just three companies used anonymous spokespeople to issue responses, compared to 56% of companies after the Parkland shooting and 12% after the Immigration Ban.

4) Consider spotlighting an ancillary movement. 33 companies spoke in support of the #MentorHer movement, a spinoff of #MeToo advocating for more female mentorship at work.

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