



Q2 2022

Propel Media Barometer

The framework
of a perfect pitch



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Thank you!

Overview

Does the perfect story pitch exist?

- We analyzed a sample of nearly 400,000 real pitches from 2022 for this study to figure out what makes up the “perfect” pitch today.
- How long should you make your subject line? How do journalists feel about pitches with emojis? Are there certain days of the week to send a pitch that will seriously raise or lower your odds at getting a response?
- In Q1, journalists responded to an average of **3.37%** of the pitches they received, showing journalist engagement is already lower than it was last year (2021 annual average response rate of **3.53%**).
- It's therefore of increasing importance that, as PR pros, we do our best to share stories that resonate with relevant media contacts that have an interest in the subject area, in a way that gives them what they need quickly.
- Did you know that the perfect pitch of 2022 was under 150 words long? This study will reveal why some of your pitches do so much better than others, and why some are falling flat.
- New to the Propel Media Barometer? It's our quarterly benchmarking study of all the PR pitches sent via our platform, designed to help you improve your media relations practice and provide you with data to support your earned media outreach. It's our way of helping you to benchmark your PR efforts against your peers and drive better results in the future.

Journalist engagement



2022 open & response rates

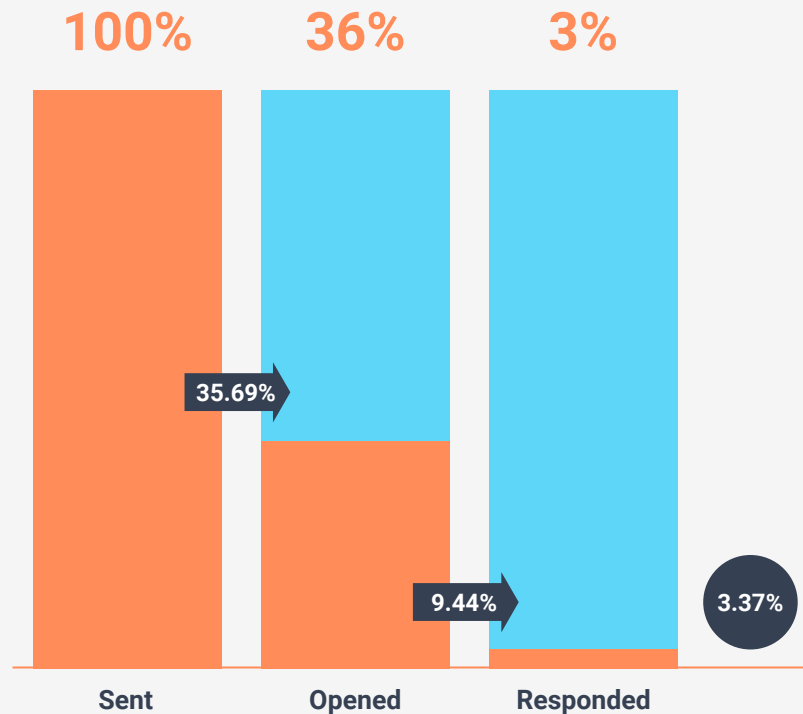
The average journalist open rate to PR pitches was **36%**.

- Many outlets employ email filtering technology to quickly screen messages and sort out spam, which can trigger an email 'open' without any manual interaction from media contacts. This means journalists are likely opening much less than 36% of the pitches they receive.

Of 100 pitches journalists receive, they only **respond** to about **3** of them.

- The average journalist response rate to pitches in Q1 was 3.37%.
- The Q1 2022 average journalist response rate decreased slightly from the 2021 annual average rate (3.53%).

Average open & response rates

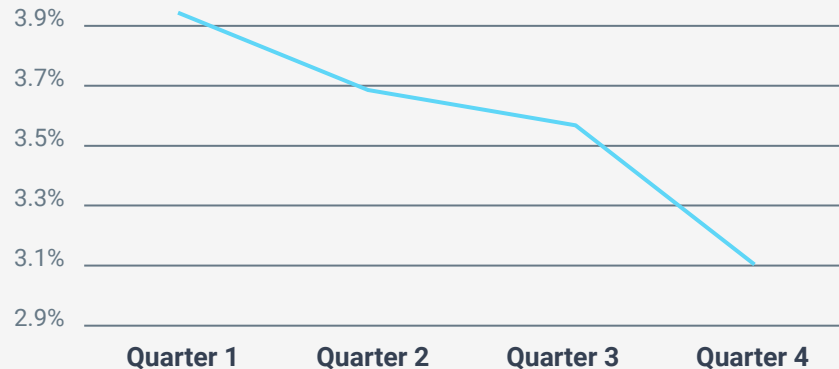


Journalist engagement explored

- In 2021, journalists steadily grew less responsive to email pitches from PR pros.
- Now, the Q1 average journalist response rate to pitches decreased by **14.7%**, moving from **3.95%** in Q1 2021 to **3.37%** in Q1 2022.

Are PR story pitches becoming even less effective?

Average Journalist Response Rate (%) Per Fiscal Quarter (2021)



Q1 Average Journalist Response Rates (%)



Making a strong first impression



Keep the subject line short

The **most** engaging subject lines were 1-5 words long.

- Pitches with subject lines 1-5 words long had the **highest** average journalist response rate (**5.59%**).

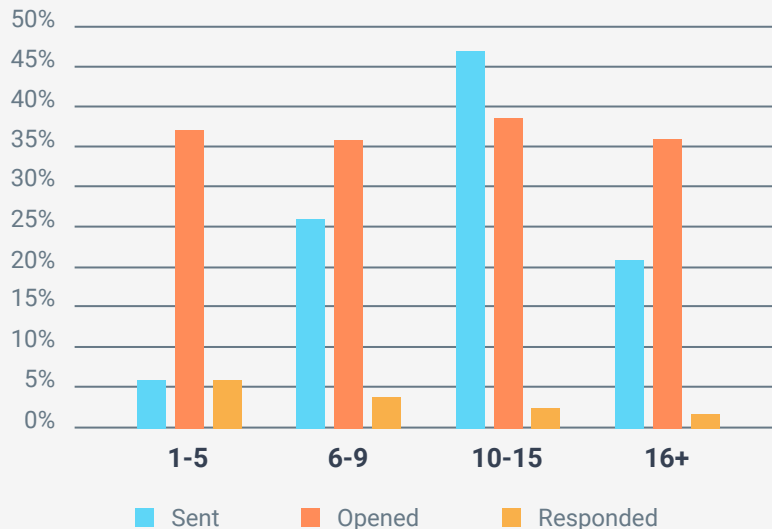
The **least** engaging subject lines were the longest (16+ words).

- Subject lines 16+ words long had an average journalist response rate of **1.87%**.

PR pros keep **most** pitch subject lines between 10 and 15 words (**46.67%**).

- Although most pitches had subject lines that were 10-15 words long, these pitches had one of the **lowest** average journalist response rates (**2.62%**).

Open and Response Rates (%) by Subject Line Length (Words)



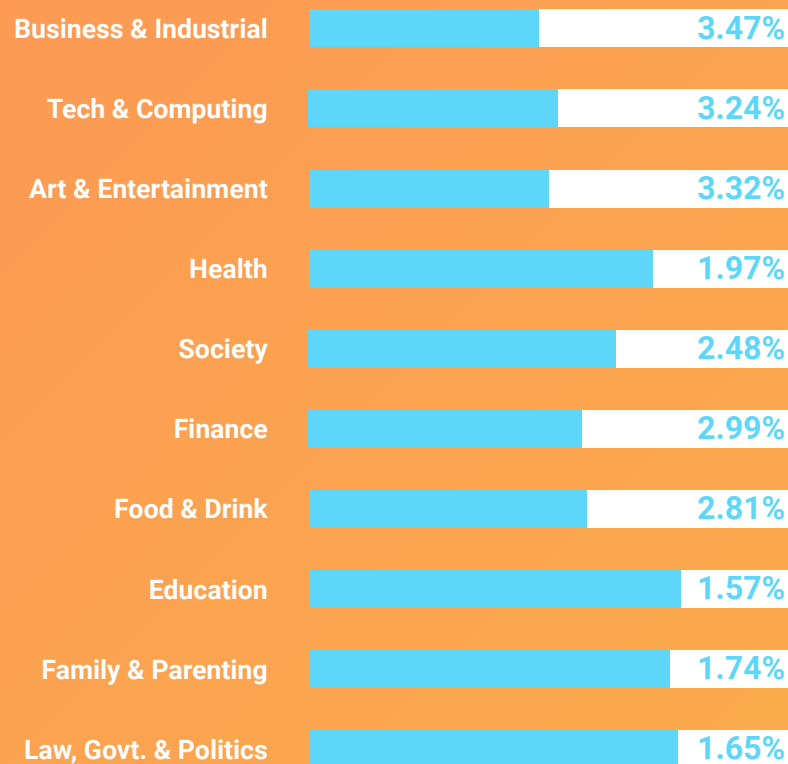
Journalist-topic relevance

In Q1, the three most-pitched topics were Business & Industrial, Tech & Computing and Art & Entertainment.

- Of the most-pitched topics, these three topics also had the the highest average journalist response rates.

Education-related story pitches were some of the least successful in gaining responses from journalists.

- Education ranked no. 8 in the top 10 topic categories that PR pros pitched about, and it got the lowest average journalist response rate of the 10 most-pitched topics (**1.57%**).



Note: Topics ordered from most pitched to least and correspond with average journalist response rate (%).

Digging deeper: the body of an email pitch



Using emojis in the lead

Story pitches with emojis **did not** prove more effective than those without.

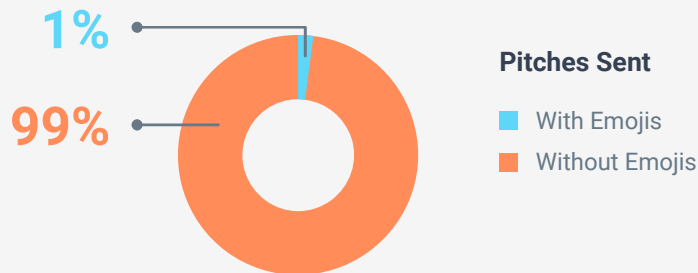
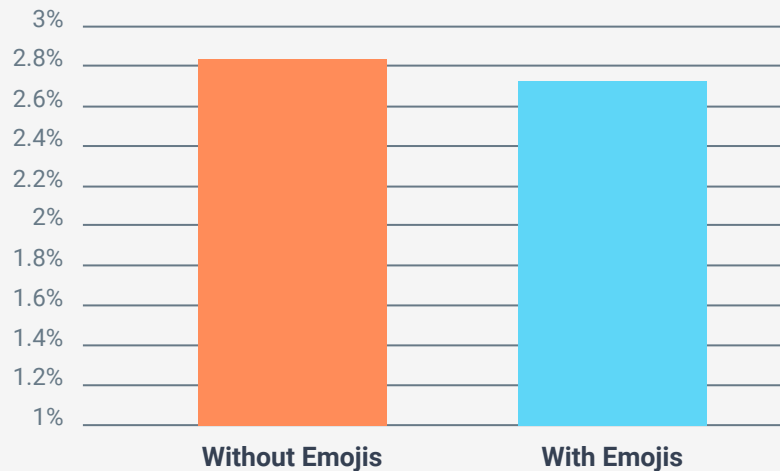
- Journalist responded to pitches **without** emojis in the lead (2.82%) slightly more than they responded to pitches with emojis (2.76%).

PR pros are only using emojis in about **1%** of their pitch leads.

Roughly **99%** of pitch leads do not contain emojis.



Average Journalist Response Rate to Pitches



The best pitch lead length

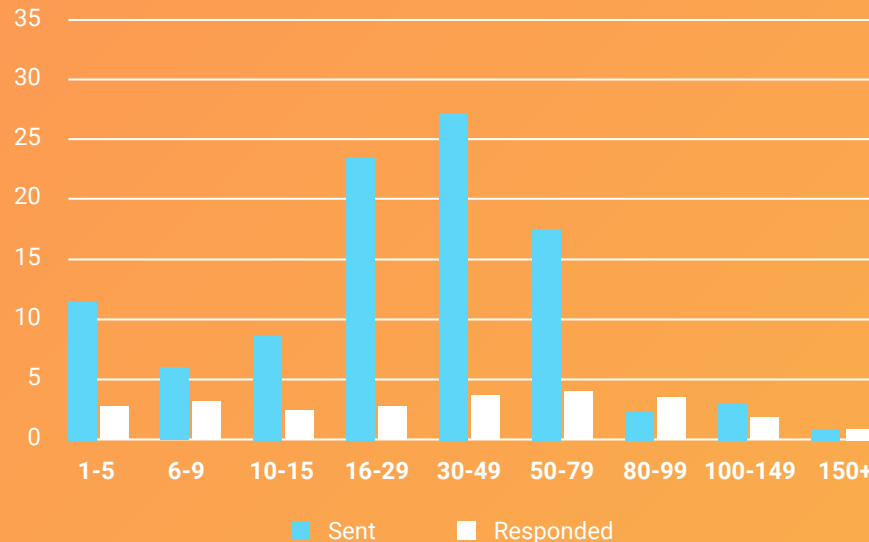
The most engaging pitch leads were 50-79 words long.

- Pitch leads between 50 and 79 words had the **highest** average journalist response rate (4.16%).

Journalists engaged the least with pitch leads 150+ words long (0.61%).

PR pros sent the most leads that were 30-49 words long.

Average Journalist Response Rate (%) by Lead Length



Just the right pitch body length

Journalists responded the **most** to the **shortest** pitches.

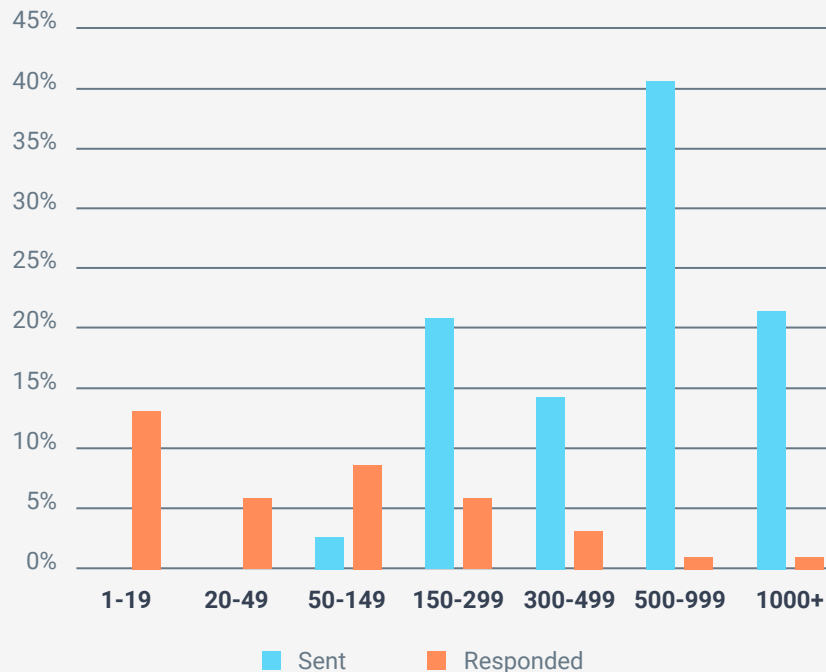
- The average journalist response rate to pitches **50-149** words long was **7.85%**.
- Pitches 1-49 words sparked some of the highest engagement rates, but PR pros sent less than 200 pitches within this range. These rates may be high largely due to the small sample size at hand.

Pitches which saw the **lowest** response rate were the **longest**.

- Pitches 1000+ words long had the lowest average journalist response rate (1.46%).

PR pros sent **less than 1%** of pitches that were 50 or fewer words long.

Average Journalist Response Rate (%) by Pitch Body Length



Number of embedded links

PR pros sent **most** pitches with 4+ embedded links in them.

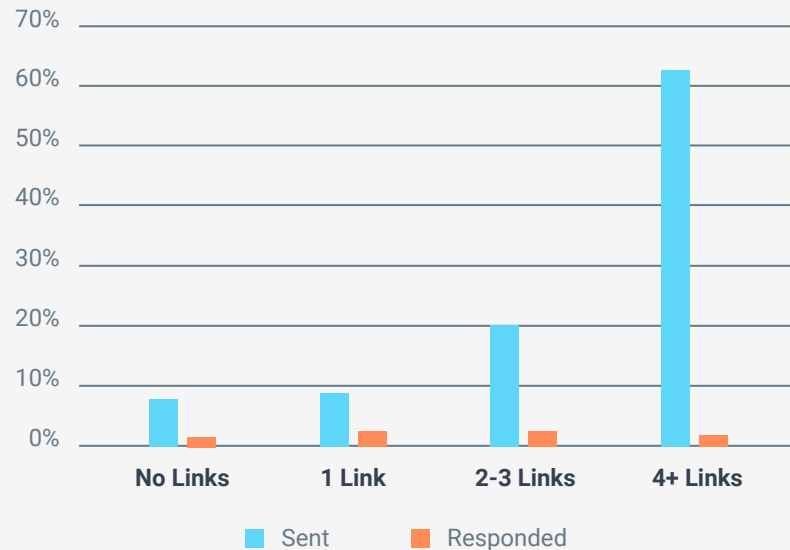
- Nearly **64%** of pitches included at least four embedded links.
- Most pitches had 4+ embedded links, but the average journalist response rate to these pitches was only **2.69%**.

Story pitches with 2-3 embedded links had the highest average journalist response rate (3.55%).

- Although pitches with 2-3 embedded links had the highest average journalist response rate, only **20%** of pitches fell within this range.

Story pitches without any embedded links had the lowest average journalist response rate (1.55%).

Average Journalist Response Rate (%) by Embedded Links Count



Note: Embedded link count includes links embedded in the email signature.

Timing

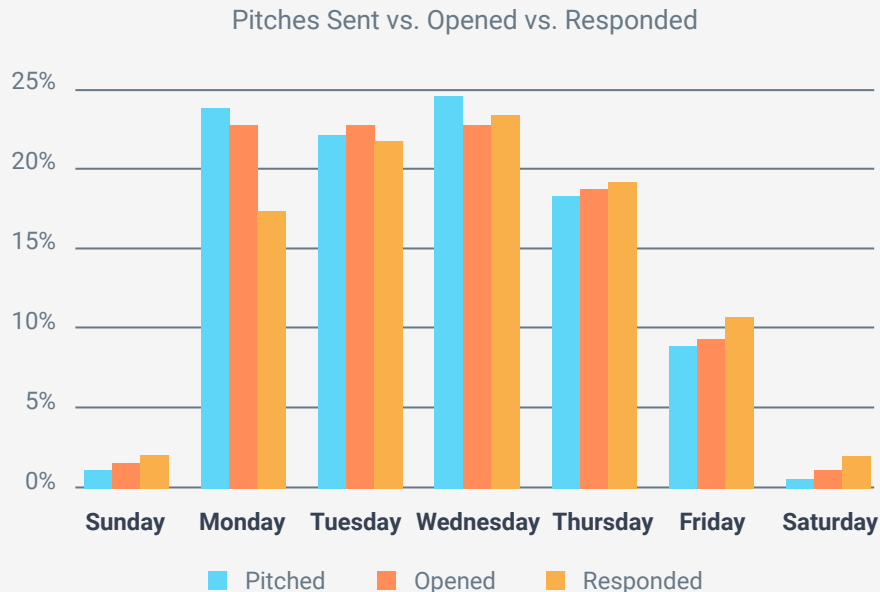


Send vs. open vs. response times

Despite the prevailing wisdom that mid-week is the best time to pitch journalists, **Friday** continues to be the day that sees the **highest** journalist engagement relative to pitch volume.

- **Friday** continues to be the day of the week with the highest percent of journalist responses (**12.0%**) relative to the amount of pitches PR pros are sending out (**8.5%**).
- PR pros sent the most pitches on **Wednesday** (**24.8%**), and journalists responded to the most pitches on Wednesday (**23.3%**).

PR pros face the least competition from other pitches on **Friday.**



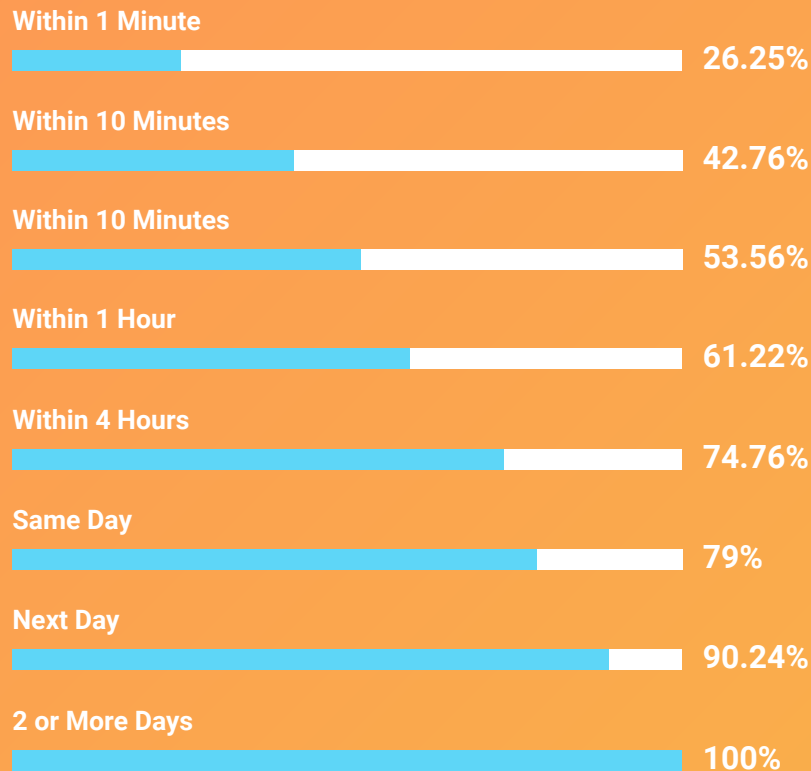
Average time to open a pitch

The majority of pitches are opened within **the first 10 minutes** of landing in a journalist's inbox.

Journalists open nearly **80%** of pitches the same day they receive them.

If a pitch isn't opened within the first **2** days of sending, there is less than a **10%** chance that it will be opened.

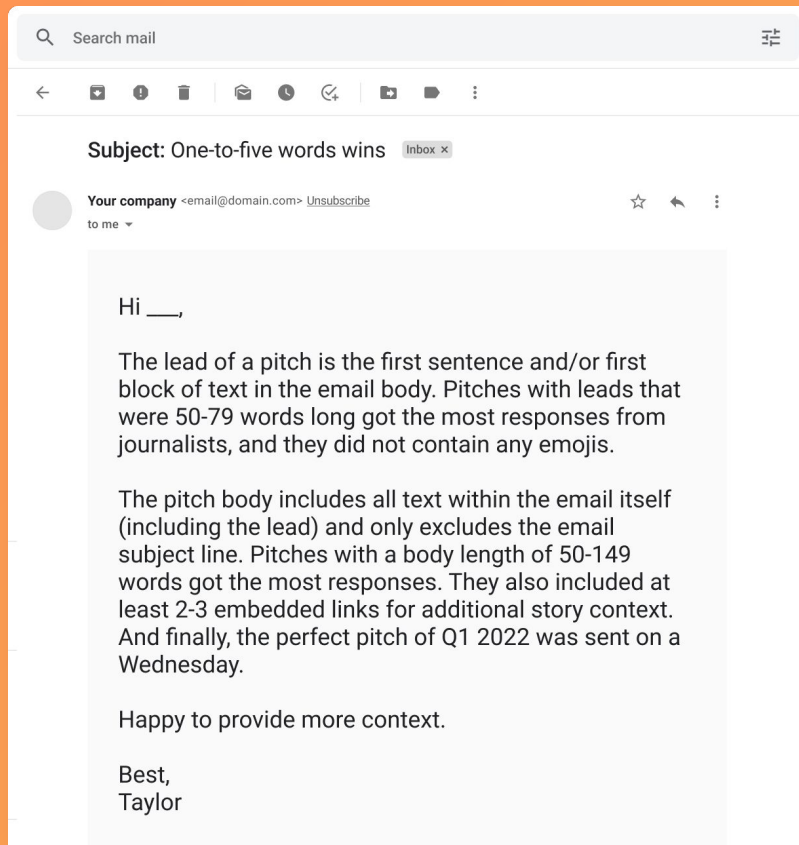
Average Time to Open a Pitch



Does the perfect pitch exist?



The perfect pitch of Q1 2022



Note: Conclusions about the most engaging pitches only include analysis of traits used in 500+ pitches.

One size does not fit all

- We created this study to determine some of the most effective ways of pitching journalists, and to help you learn from some of the less successful methods of pitching, too. As we've seen from the average journalist engagement scores connected with different elements of PR pitches, there are quite a few macro trends that offer a strong starting point in crafting pitches. For example:

The vast majority of PR pros are including **4+** embedded links in their email pitches when using only **2-3** links resonates much better.

If your pitch is weighing in at **1000+** words, you've definitely said too much! Stick to the basics, and you can always share extra details as requested.

- There are endless situational factors to think about when crafting story pitches. What we hope we've demonstrated in this study is the value of applying more than just gut-feel or prevailing wisdom to your earned media strategy. By analyzing what's worked and what hasn't from our previous PR campaigns, we can improve the results that we can deliver in the future. Try using an earned media management platform like Propel to start unlocking your data-driven approach!

Which of your pitches spark the most engagement from media contacts? Which ones come closest to “perfect” and why?

Key Takeaways

- The most engaging subject lines were brief and relevant. **Subject lines** with the **highest** average journalist response rate were only **1-5 words long**. Interestingly, PR pros used these subjects the least. The majority of email pitches (**47%**) had subjects 10-15 words long.
- Journalists responded to pitches that had **emojis** in the lead nearly the same amount as they responded to those that did not. PR pros are only including emojis in **1%** of pitches.
- The **longest** pitches got the lowest engagement from media contacts. Pitch leads between 50 and 79 words had the highest average journalist **response** rate (**4.16%**). And Journalists also **responded most** to pitches under 150 words total.
- Pitches with **2-3 embedded links** got the **highest** average journalist response rate (**3.55%**). But most pitches have too many links in them. PR pros included 4+ links in most story pitches, and the average journalist response rate to these pitches was only **2.69%**.
- Despite the prevailing wisdom that mid-week is the best time to pitch journalists, **Friday** continues to be the day that sees the **highest** journalist engagement relative to pitch volume.

How will you use the Propel Media Barometer to correct the course of media relations?
To continue learning from our quarterly reports on the earned media landscape and its constant evolution, make sure to [keep up with Propel](#).



Thank you & happy pitching!

Still looking for the right PR tools to help you tell your story? Propel PRM is made to make your life easier, from researching the perfect media contacts to easily measuring results.

[Book a demo with our team](#) to learn more about Propel, the all-in-one PR tool suite you've been looking for.

[Learn About Propel](#)