



Q4 2022 Propel Media Barometer

The framework
of a perfect pitch



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Key takeaways

Thank you!

Overview

What were some of the most successful pitching tactics of Q3 2022? If you're new to the Propel Media Barometer, it is a quarterly data report we share to help comms pros best navigate media relations and set up a data-informed pitching strategy. It's our way of keeping a pulse on the communications industry and making PR doable and attainable for all.

- For this PR pitching report, we analyzed a sample of approximately **400,000** real pitches PR people sent via the Propel platform during Q3 2022 to figure out what makes up the "perfect" pitch today.
- How long should you make your subject line? What is the appropriate pitch length in total word count? Are there certain days of the week to send a pitch that will seriously raise or lower your odds at getting a response?
- See a few highlights from what we learned:

In Q3, journalists responded to an average of **3.35%** of the pitches they received, which is **0.10% higher** than the average journalist response rate in Q2, optimistically.

The majority of stories are published **within three days** of the initial pitch send time. And the majority of journalist responses happen within the first **four hours** that a pitch is sent.

Journalists respond to byline pitches about **seven times more** than the overall rate, with an average journalist response rate of **26.5%**.

"Food & Drink" was the most-pitched topic with the highest average journalist response rate (**4.45%**).

Journalist engagement



Q3 2022 open & response rates

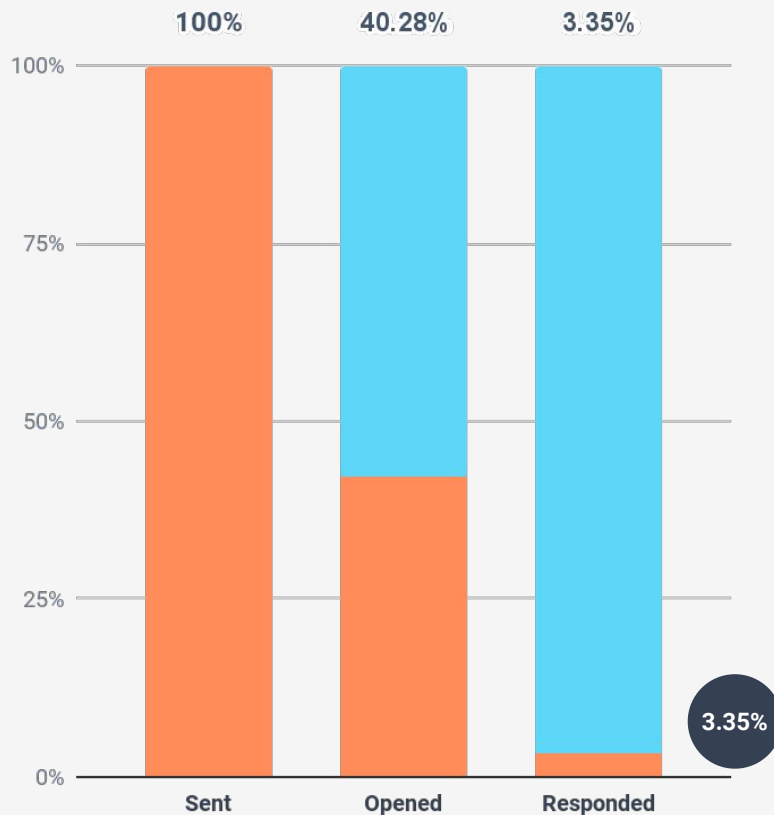
The average journalist open rate to PR pitches was **40.28%**.

- This is slightly higher than the Q1 open rate (36%) and the Q2 open rate (37.78%). Despite pitch volume fluctuating over time, journalists are opening more pitches of those they receive, Q/Q.

Journalists continue to respond to just over **3%** of the pitches they receive.

- The average journalist response rate to pitches in Q3 was **3.35%**, which is 0.10% higher than the average journalist response rate in Q2, optimistically.
- The average journalist response rate is now measuring back up to what we saw in Q1 2022 (**3.37%**).

Average open & response rates



Journalist engagement explored: Y/Y and Q/Q comparisons

How does today's journalist engagement with PR pitches compare with past engagement rates?

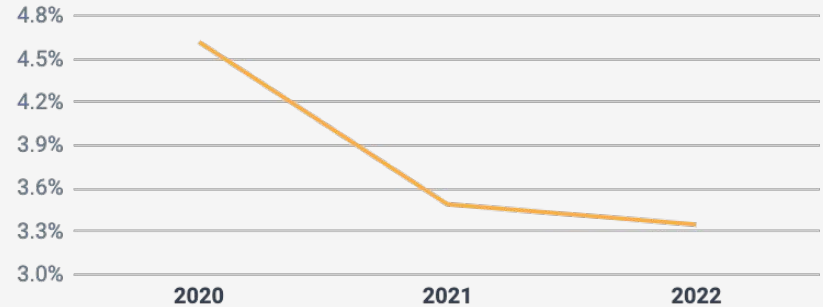
- The average journalist response rate to media pitches in Q3 has been on a steady decline since 2020, which marked the beginning of our quarterly PR pitching research.

As you can see on the right, the average journalist response rate to PR pitches has decreased by 1.27% from Q3 2020 to Q3 2022 (3.35%).

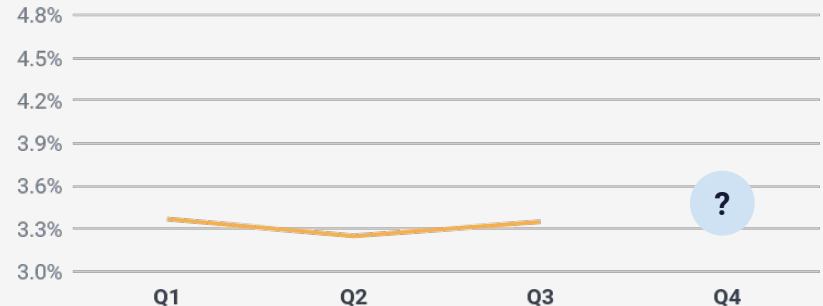
- And keeping a pulse on this year's journalist engagement with pitches, we see that the 2022 average response rate has stayed relatively consistent.

This year's average journalist response rate to PR pitches has only fluctuated by 0.12% from one quarter to the next in 2022.

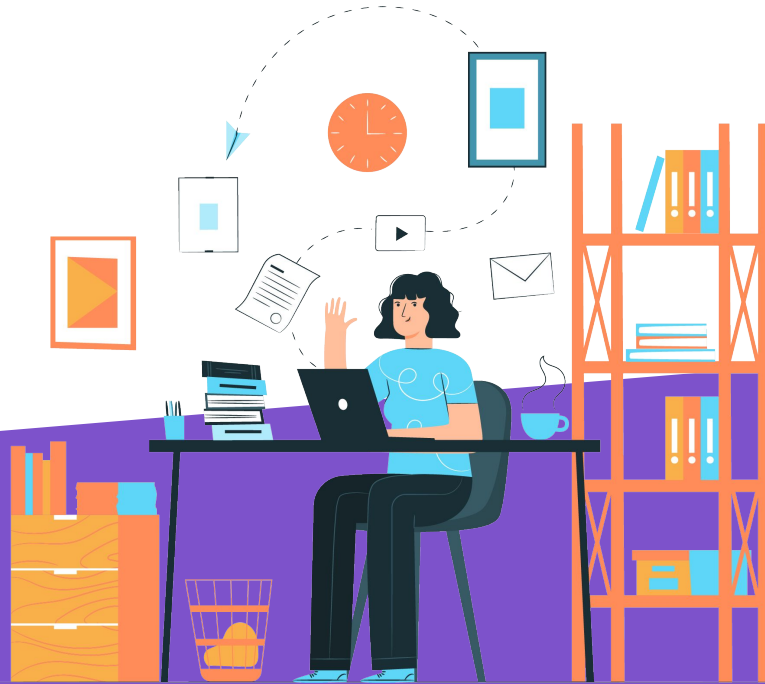
Q3 Average Journalist Response Rate (%)



2022 Average Journalist Response Rate (%)



Timing

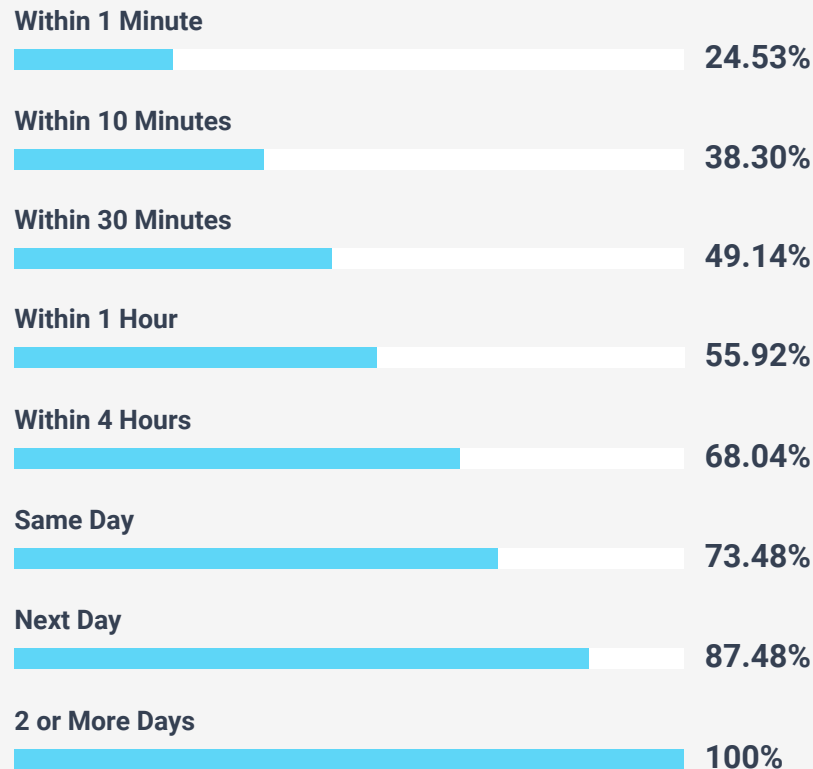


Average time to open a pitch

In just **1 hour**, journalists open the majority of the pitches they receive (**55.92%**).

Almost all pitch opens happen within the first two days that journalist receives them – **87.48%** of pitches are opened after 2 days.

However, following up can't hurt! Approximately **12.5%** of pitches are **not** opened within the first few days of the time sent, so it's possible that journalists missed your pitch altogether if they haven't opened it after 3+ days.

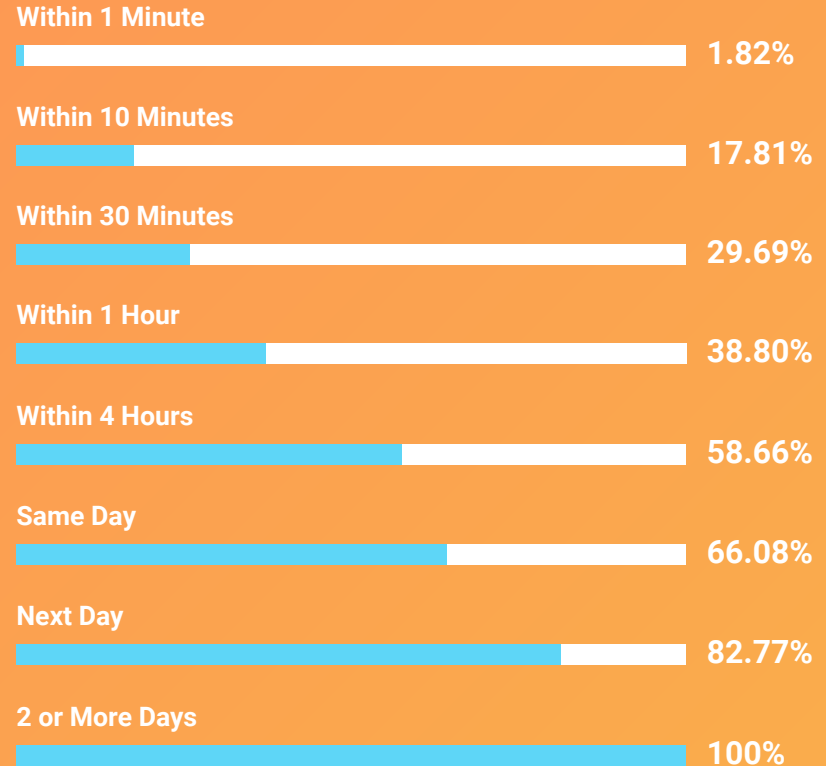


Average time to respond to a pitch

If a journalist is particularly interested in your story, they will make it known **quickly** – journalists send the majority of their pitch responses after **4 hours or less (58.66%** of all responses).

By the time that the second day passes, **82.77%** of all pitch responses come through.

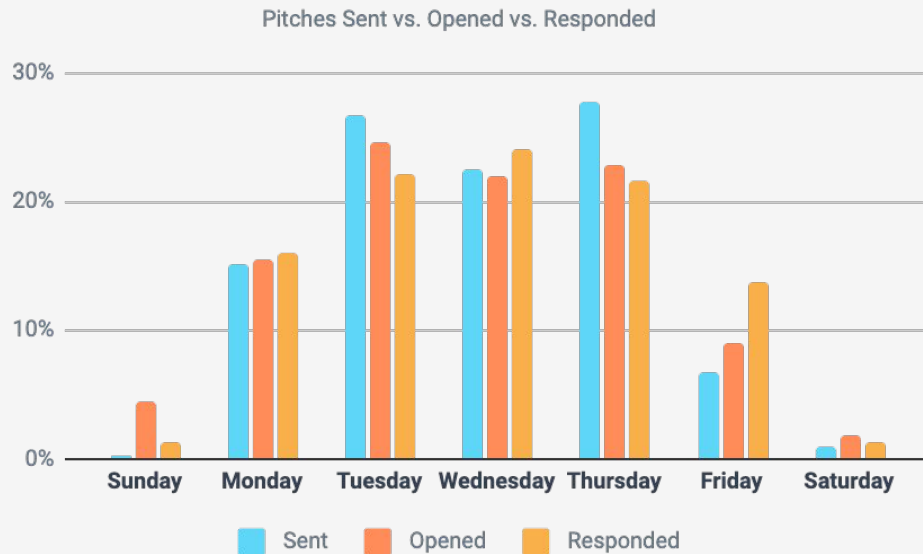
If a journalist has not responded to your pitch by day three, there is less than a **12% chance** that you'll receive one.



Send vs. open vs. response times

The middle of the week is the most popular for PR pitch engagement.

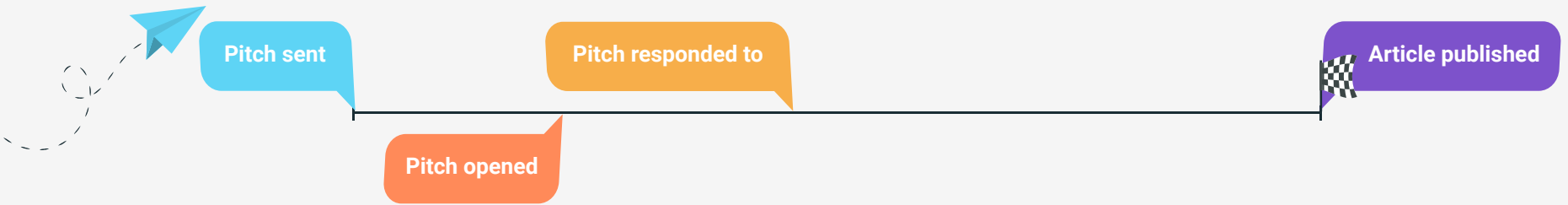
- PR people sent the most pitches on **Tuesday** and **Thursday** (26.64% and 27.78% of pitches respectively).
- Journalists also opened the most pitches on **Tuesday** and **Thursday** (24.58% and 22.9% respectively).
- And finally, journalists responded to the most pitches on **Wednesday** (24% of pitch responses).



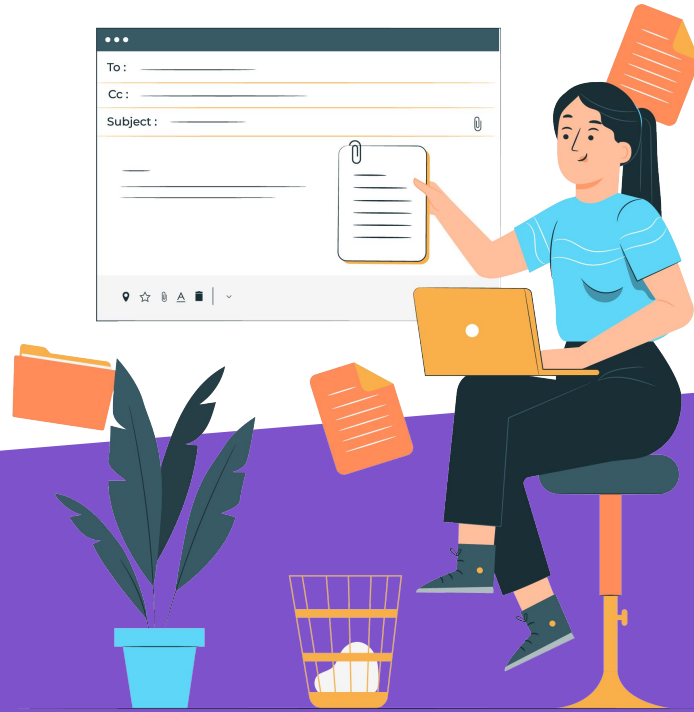
How long is the pitching cycle, from pitch to placement?

For this study on “pitching cycle” duration, we found the time it takes for the majority of stories to be published once the first pitch for an initiative has been sent out. See a breakdown of the pitching cycle stages for the open, response, and article-published times below:

- The majority of pitch opens happen **within 1 hour** of a journalist receiving the pitch (**55.92%** of all opens).
- The majority of pitch responses happen **within 4 hours** of a journalist receiving the pitch (**58.66%** of all responses).
- The majority of news placements happen **within 3 days** of the initial pitch being sent (**51.01%** of articles published).



The framework of a perfect pitch



Which pitches from Q3 did journalists engage with the most?

As you know, there are many factors that make some PR pitches much more enticing than others. Contacting the right journalist for the right topic is at the heart of this, but even using a more concise subject line could be the difference between getting a story placed and getting moved to the spam folder.

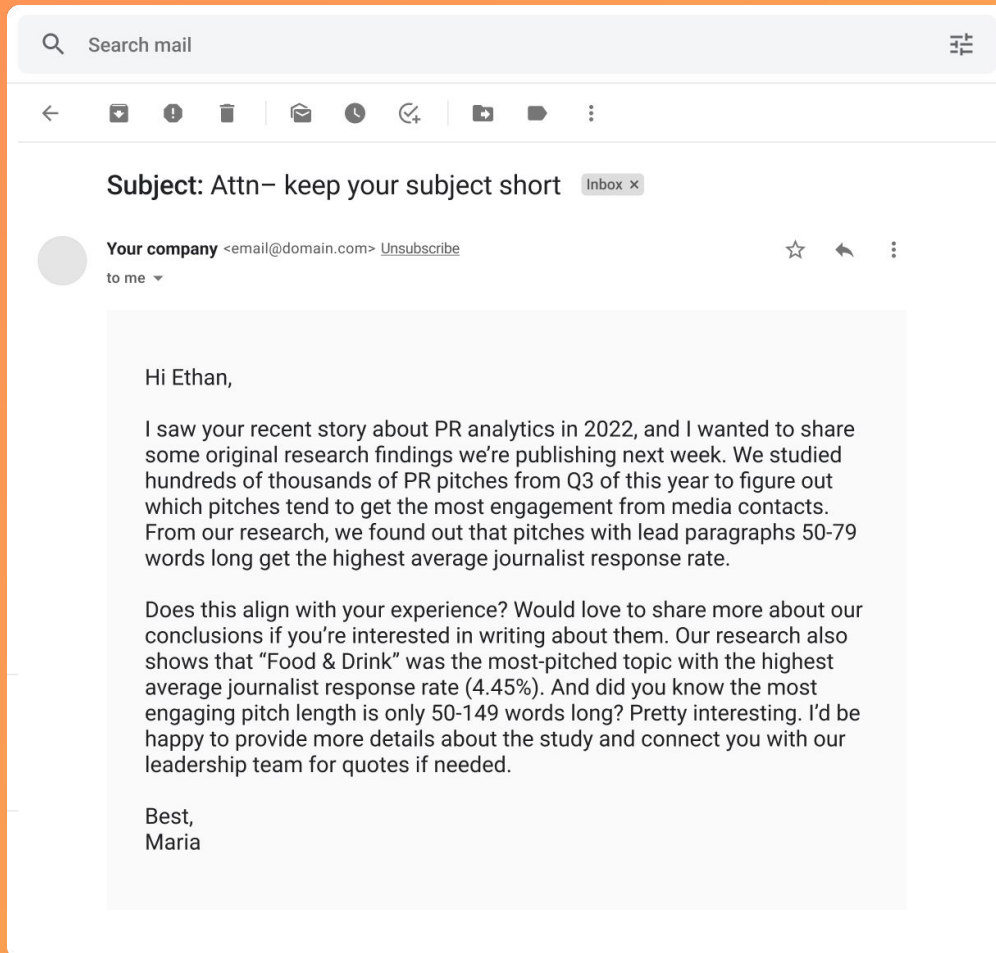
We analyzed journalist open and response rates correlated with key pitch elements like journalist-topic relevance, subject length, number of embedded links and more, arriving at the following recommendations.



PR Pitching Best Practices:

- ✓ Most pitched topic with best response rate: **"Food & Drink"**
- ✓ Best subject length: **1-5 words**
- ✓ The best pitch lead length: **50-79 words**
- ✓ The best pitch body length: **50-149 words**
- ✓ The optimal number of embedded links: **2-3**
- ✓ Best day for pitch responses: **Wednesday**

The perfect pitch of Q3 2022



Best practices for specialized pitching



What you need to know about pitching your next funding announcement

We know for a fact that journalists are interested in funding news! But the way you package that news does matter. When constructing your next funding announcement PR pitch, remember that brevity and journalist-topic relevance go a long way when it comes to increasing the odds of your story being told.

So, stick to the fundamentals in the initial pitch, and you can always provide additional information as requested. And don't add journalists to your media list without ensuring they cover the news you're pitching and tailoring your message so the value is clearly relevant to them.

For more tips on pitching funding news that makes the headlines, download [our guide](#) specific to funding announcement PR pitching.



Key findings from this study include:

- The average journalist response rate to funding pitches is **6.07%**, which nearly doubles the average response rate to all pitches from the same time period (**3.33%**).
- Funding pitches with subject lines 6-9 words long had one of the highest average journalist response rates at **6.9%**.
- Pitches 50-149 words long had the highest response rate at **15%**.
- Some of the most responsive outlets to funding pitches were Fortune (**25.64%**), The Wall Street Journal (**16.46%**) and TechCrunch (**12.12%**).

What's it take to get your story on the air?

Broadcast media has a unique ability to reach thousands of people all at once. For PR pros, this means that you or your client's message can be seen and heard by more people in more places than ever before. Here are some takeaways from what we found in this study of approximately 17,832 real broadcast PR pitches:

- Broadcast television pitches must have clear visual support. You will significantly increase the chances of your story being covered if you describe the footage that can accompany your story, or even include a few examples.
- Broadcast media pitches have an average journalist response rate of just **1.47%**.
- Media contacts are most likely to respond to pitches with subject lines between 1 and 5 words (**4.98%** response rate).
- The most engaging broadcast story pitches had **500 words** or less.
- The two pitch length ranges with the highest average journalist response rate (**3.06%**) were 50-149 words long and 300-499 words long.
- Use an informative subject line. This might sound like common knowledge, but according to reporters, many pitch subject lines start with "Press Release" or "Story about..." and are redundant and time consuming to sift through.

For more tips on pitching news to broadcast media outlets, download [our guide](#) specific to broadcast PR pitching.

How and why should you pitch bylined articles?

Bylined content is a strategic avenue for building thought leadership, credibility and share of voice (SOV), and becoming an expert on any given topic. Here are some takeaways from what we found in this study of approximately 1,500 real PR pitches about bylined articles:

- Not all story pitches are created equal! When it comes to pitching contributed content, you're better off including a copy of the bylined article in the body of the pitch than not.
- The bylined article pitches that journalists responded to the most were **500-1000+ words long**, indicating that journalists like receiving a copy of the article straight away.
- Journalists respond to byline pitches about seven times more than the overall rate, with an average journalist response rate of **26.5%**.
- Journalists responded most to pitches with subject lines 6-9 words long (**39.25%** response rate).
- Of the most-pitched outlets, journalists at USA TODAY, The LA Times and The Washington Post responded the most, with average response rates of **27.63%**, **13.19%** and **8.7%** respectively.

For more tips on pitching bylined articles and securing the thought leadership you're after, download [our guide](#) specific to byline PR pitching.

Key takeaways

We analyzed a sample of approximately 400,000 real pitches PR people sent via the Propel platform during Q3 2022 for this study to figure out what makes up the “perfect” pitch today.

Here are just a few of the highlights from this quarter’s report:

- In Q3, journalists responded to an average of **3.35%** of the pitches they received, which is **0.10% higher** than the average journalist response rate in Q2, optimistically.
- The majority of stories are published **within three days** of the initial pitch send time, and the majority of journalist responses happen within the first **four hours** that a pitch is sent.
- Journalists respond to byline pitches about **seven times more** than the overall rate, with an average journalist response rate of **26.5%**.
- Broadcast television pitches must have **clear visual support**. You will significantly increase the chances of your story being covered if you describe the footage that can accompany your story, or even include a few examples.
- Some of the most responsive outlets to funding pitches were Fortune (**25.64%**), The Wall Street Journal (**16.46%**) and TechCrunch (**12.12%**).

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 as a comms pro, 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](#)