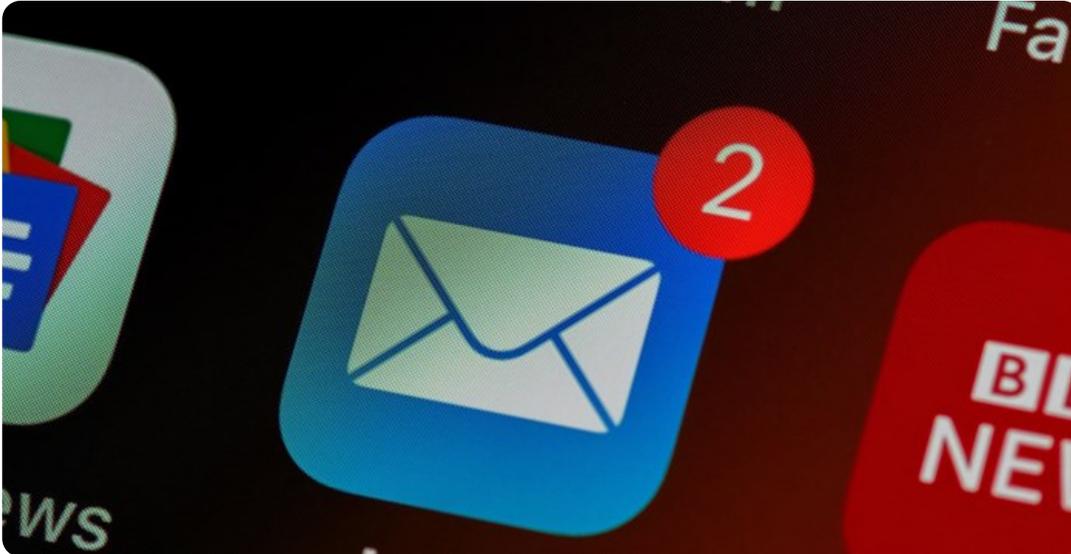


Report: Journalist response rate to pitches remains under 3%

According to the *Q3 2023 Propel Media Barometer*, journalists only responded to 2.99% of the nearly 500,000 pitches sent through the platform in Q2 of 2023.



Source: www.unsplash.com

Meanwhile, the number of funding round pitches increased by 38.58%, and while the number of podcast pitches dipped slightly, they were responded to 16.59% of the time.

Remain low

While there was a very slight uptick in the number of responses between Q1 and Q2, the fact that journalists' response rates remain below 3% for the third straight quarter is concerning. This trend should sound the alarm for PR pros to shift their pitching tactics to beyond solely mainstream media if they want to get the best results for their organizations. In the past quarter alone, *Buzzfeed News* shut its doors, *Vice* filed for bankruptcy, *ESPN* laid off 20 on-camera personalities, the *LA Times* laid off 74 newsroom staff, and *Insider* slashed 100 jobs.

In terms of PR pitching, the day with the most pitching activity was still Tuesday, with 27.27% of pitches sent that day. In a change from last quarter, this quarter showed that journalists were most likely to respond on Tuesdays with 27.73% of responses happening then. In addition, subject lines of between one to five words had the highest response rate of 4.57%, but there were only approximately 25,000 pitches in this bracket sent. The bracket with the most pitches sent had between 10-15 words and received a response rate of 2.3%. However, pitches with subject lines of six to nine words had open rates of 3% on average.

Concise pitches

Meanwhile, pitches whose bodies were between 51-150 words saw the highest number of responses at 6.53%, which is a higher rate for this bracket than last quarter. Meanwhile, pitches with bodies between 501-1,000 words only saw a 1.81% response rate, further proving that journalists want concise pitches that get to the point quickly. Pitches in the 51-150 word range comprised 3.48% of pitches sent, while those between 501-1,000 words comprised the largest category at 29.89% of all pitches sent.



Finally, funding round pitching revealed such strange numbers that they drove Propel to reach out to journalists figure out what was going on. For instance, the company found that the volume of pitches mentioning pre-seed and seed funding rounds rose by 551.16% compared to Q1, the number of Series A pitches declined by almost 74%, and the number of Series C rounds increased by 413%. Meanwhile, pre-seed and seed funding round response rates dropped 67.41%, Series B responses fell by 52.43%, and Series C responses fell by 54.1%.

These numbers, which accurately reflect what journalists are seeing on their end, appear to tell two different stories. One is that not all is doom and gloom with the world economy as people are investing more. And the second is that fewer journalists are being forced to contend with an ever increasing number of pitches, meaning all but the best pitches are yielding results.

“The numbers in the *Propel Q3 2023 Media Barometer* should be used as a source of inspiration for PR professionals who are concerned about the state of the industry,” said Zach Cutler, co-founder & CEO of Propel.

“For instance, it’s reassuring to see an increase in the volume of pitches on subjects typically associated with an improving economy. The numbers appear to show improvement in the tech sector, and the amount of pitches mentioning ‘growth’ and ‘investments’ are on the rise - providing a potential bellwether for where the economy is headed. However, the numbers also show that when it comes to pitching, we’re likely never going to see the mainstream media response rates of years past. The nature of PR is changing, and it’s more important than ever for communications professionals to understand and adapt to this changing media landscape and focus on quality of coverage over quantity.”

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