

Propel's Q2 2024 Barometer: Surge in journalist responses and PR trends

Propel has announced the release of its Q2 2024 Propel Media Barometer. In good news for PR professionals, the barometer found that journalist response rates to the over 400,000 pitches sent through the platform in Q1 rose to 3.43%. This is a 9% increase over Q4 2023.



Source: www.unsplash.com

Upward trend

Q1 2024 saw the highest journalist responses since Propel began coming out with its media barometer. This follows a general upward trend in response rates seen starting in Q2 of 2023, barring a slight but expected dip in responses over the holiday period. What's also interesting is that this increased response rate comes as PR professionals sent 4% fewer pitches.

With fewer journalists to pitch to, communicators seem to be hyper-focusing their pitching efforts and doing less spray and pray. This figure also correlates with more PR professionals adopting genAI into their workflows.

Meanwhile, subject lines of between 1-5 words had the highest response rate of 4.73%, and pitches with subjects between 10-15 words were sent the most (36.54% of all pitches). However, subject lines between six to nine words were opened the most (48.83%). Consistent with previous barometers, it was found that pitches whose bodies were between 51-150 words saw the highest number of responses at 7.51%, while those between 501-1,000 words, despite being sent the most, only saw a 1.51% response rate.



Report: Journalists respond to 3.15% of pitches, podcast pitch volume surges by 22%

22 Jan 2024



The most popular day for pitches was on Tuesday with 32.46% of all pitches going out on this day. Unsurprisingly, the most popular day for people in the media to open pitches was also on Tuesday, with 31.49% of all pitches being opened then. However, journalists responded to pitches most on Thursday, with 26.2% of all pitches being replied to on that day.

The barometer also revealed that pitches to podcasts continued to increase volume. However, the responses fell by 23%, being responded to only 10.31% of the time. As podcasters receive more pitches, they're becoming more inundated with emails, making it increasingly difficult for them to respond to all the inbound interview requests. However, their open rates are still quite high, and they're opening 74% of the pitches they receive.

Hungry content

Influencers saw an incredible 454% increase in pitches over Q1 2024 compared to Q4 2023. They are also hungry for content, with 92% of pitches to them being opened. Influencers also provided the best response rates at 37.72%. Influencers are becoming increasingly prominent in media, and more people are going to them for their news. Propel expects to see these numbers continue to grow as journalist influencers gain more prominence in the media landscape.

The most pitched topic of the quarter was unsurprisingly artificial intelligence. In fact, there were 42% more pitches mentioning this technology in Q1 2024 than there were in Q4 2023. However, given the overwhelming amount of pitches mentioning this tech, journalist responses dropped by 62%. It appears that unless an organization has something groundbreaking to say about AI, people in the media will view whatever someone has to say on the subject as just adding to the noise.

Finally, Q1 2024 saw a 100% reduction in the amount of Seed Funding investment rounds being pitched, while pitch volumes for all stages of funding decreased significantly. However, this doesn't mean that tech deals weren't being done, as pitches about mergers and acquisitions increased 1,760% and had a 7.5% response rate. I

n addition, pitches mentioning growth increased by 358% with a response rate of 4.7%. This shows that there aren't nearly as many tech funding rounds being signed, and seems to point to an economic trend where larger companies are increasingly acquiring smaller companies.

"The engagement rate for people in the media over the past quarter is extremely encouraging," said Zach Cutler, co-founder & CEO of Propel.

"Based on our research, it appears PR professionals are relying less on spray and pray methods. A major factor playing a part in this change in tactics seems to be the large-scale adoption of AI into PR workflows. AI gives communicators their time back, which is then being used to develop better strategies and write more personalised pitches. These numbers prove that despite the newsroom cuts we've seen over the past quarter, it's still possible to get impactful earned media coverage as long as there's an effective strategy and the communicator is willing to take the time to research and personalise their message."