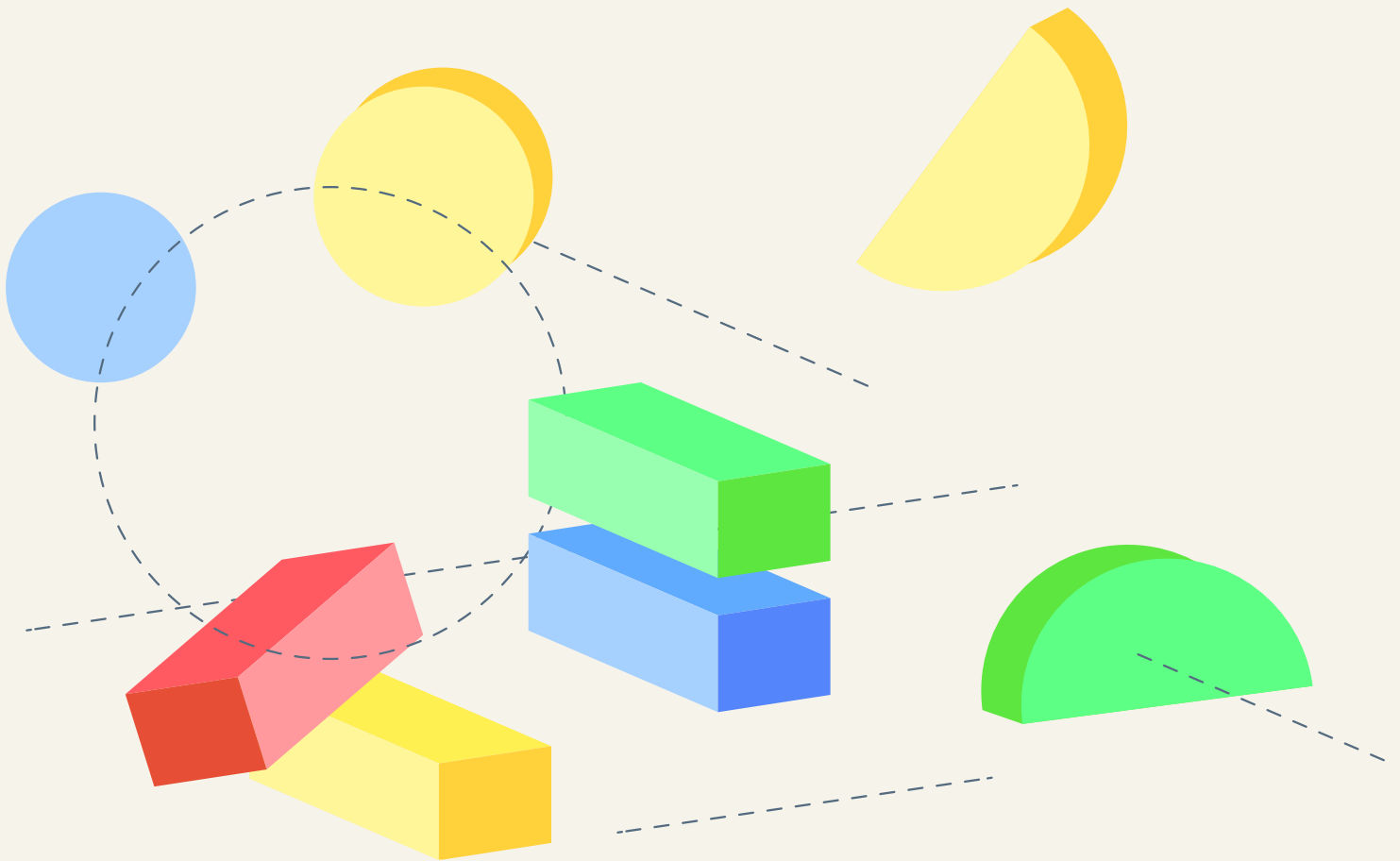


Data that Delivers

TAKEAWAYS FROM 14 MILLION PITCHES THAT YOU CAN APPLY TO YOUR MEDIA OUTREACH



MUCK RACK

- AND -

Michael Smart **PR**



Michael Smart
CEO, MICHAEL SMARTPR

INTRODUCTION

What to expect from this ebook

I've talked with thousands of PR pros about the successes and struggles they face pitching journalists. I've talked with nearly a hundred journalists about the things they love and hate about PR pitches.

This ebook gives you an even more reliable playbook. We've analyzed millions of pitches and identified unique and repeatable elements in the most successful ones.

And by successful pitches, we mean the ones that get opened, get responses, and get **placements**. You're not trying to blend in with or impress your coworkers. You're trying to engage journalists and earn placements for your organization or client.

We'll show you the proven techniques for how to do that.



Source and Methodology

There were more than **14 million** pitches sent through Muck Rack's Public Relations Management (PRM) platform, from August 1, 2021 through July 31, 2022.

We queried Muck Rack's database using SQL, allowing us to sort and rank a huge set of pitches by a variety of metrics. Many thanks to data scientist Rob Arthur for his efforts and expertise on this project.

In total, we used **14,475,147** anonymized pitches for this analysis (up from about 5.2 million [last year](#)). A "pitch" is defined as every email sent to individual journalists, regardless of whether it was a one-off email or an email sent to multiple journalists at a time. For example, the same pitch sent to 100 people counts as 100 pitches in this analysis. Also note that because Muck Rack makes it easy for PR pros to personalize pitches at scale, many of the same pitches sent are still customized directly for the recipient.

Here's an important disclaimer on the reliability of email engagement metrics such as open rates and clickthrough rates. Privacy measures such as [Apple Mail Privacy Protection](#) have changed the way systems process emails and are wreaking havoc on what used to be a straightforward analysis of email engagement. This affects all email tracking software, not just Muck Rack. Apple's changes started kicking in about September of last year, and therefore affected this study significantly.

What this means for you:

You can no longer rely on open rates alone to guide your next actions. Maybe you see that an individual journalist opened your recent emails, so you assume they're interested in your topic. You could be right. Or you could be me in sixth grade when Jessica sat next to me everyday for a week

and I assumed she liked me. In which case you would be wrong. Jessica didn't like me, she needed glasses and she sat next to me to be closer to the chalkboard. This would have been obvious if I had stopped to evaluate any other pieces of information. Like did she ever talk to me? No. Did she ever even look at me? No.

Instead of basing your actions on open rates and CTR that may not reflect reality, use journalists' responses and coverage to evaluate the success of your pitch methodology and adjust accordingly.

What this means for this ebook:

We've used these metrics for relative comparisons across millions of emails. Although the privacy changes above dampen the reliability of ranking one individual email pitch above another, the data are still reliable enough that we can draw conclusions about large numbers of emails grouped together. You'll see how we handle this below - for example, we look at "all the emails sent to 2-9 recipients" and compare that average to other averages.

When it came to identifying successful emails as evidence of best practices, we combed through the most-opened emails and noted patterns and commonalities and selected some specific email pitches that are representative of the best practices we observed.



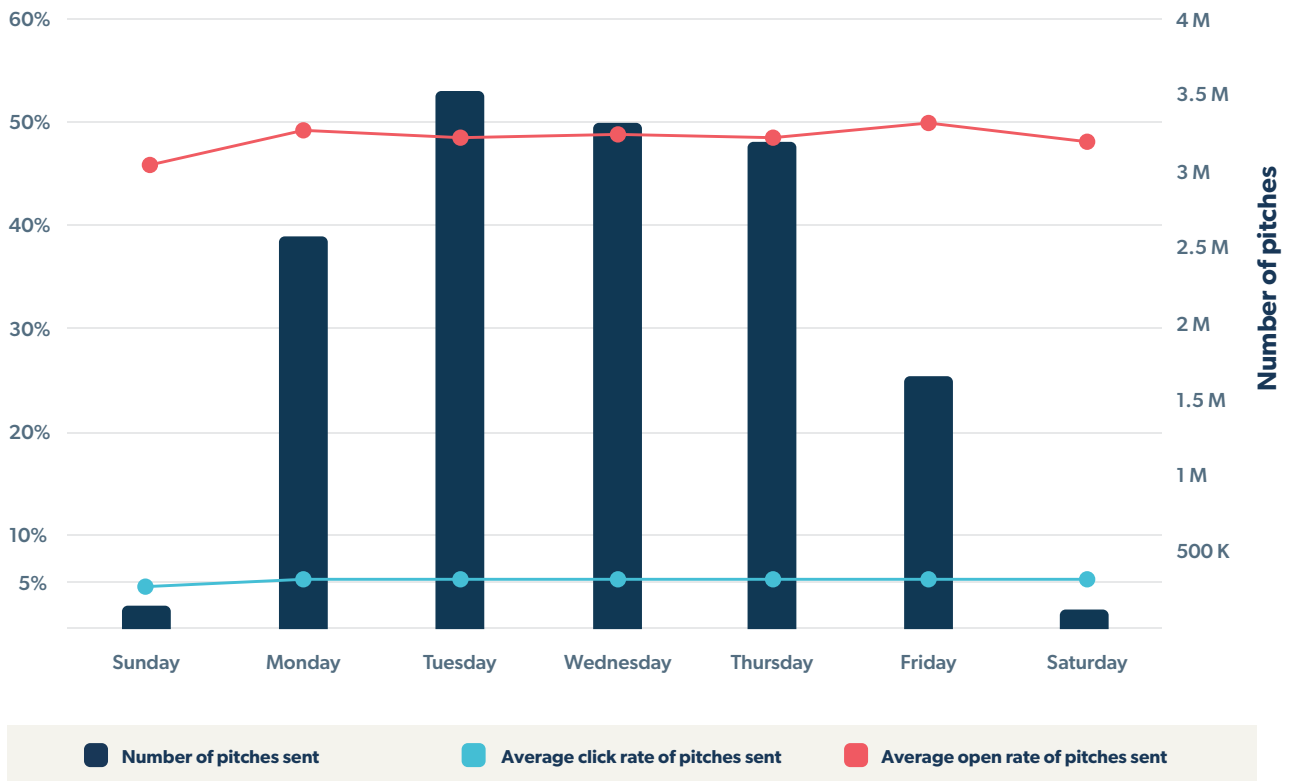
DATA-DRIVEN QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1 What are the best days of the week to pitch?

Bad news – the data yielded no neon arrow pointing to a specific day.

Good news – When you get that urge to do some hard core media pitching, you can just go for it, no matter what weekday it is.

NUMBER AND EFFECTIVENESS OF PITCHES BY DAY OF THE WEEK



Observations:

- It's freaky how consistent the engagement metrics are across weekdays. Very slight bump on Fridays, but not enough to be meaningful.
- The obvious exceptions are the weekends. Normally that wouldn't be remarkable, but...
- Last year, there was a significant bump for both open rates AND clickthrough rates on Sundays. I hypothesized that this resulted from the lower pitch volume – journalists had fewer pitches that day so were more likely to attend to the ones they did get. Looks like I was wrong, because this year there is still a significant drop in the number of pitches on weekends, and a drop in engagement too.
- My new guess – the twelve months preceding Aug. 1, 2021 contained a huge disruption in our workflow. COVID had most of us at home, and days of the week blurred together. Maybe more journalists got a head start on their inboxes on Sundays? And maybe now we're re-settling back into a more familiar weekly routine. Who knows - I'll be eager to see this data next year.

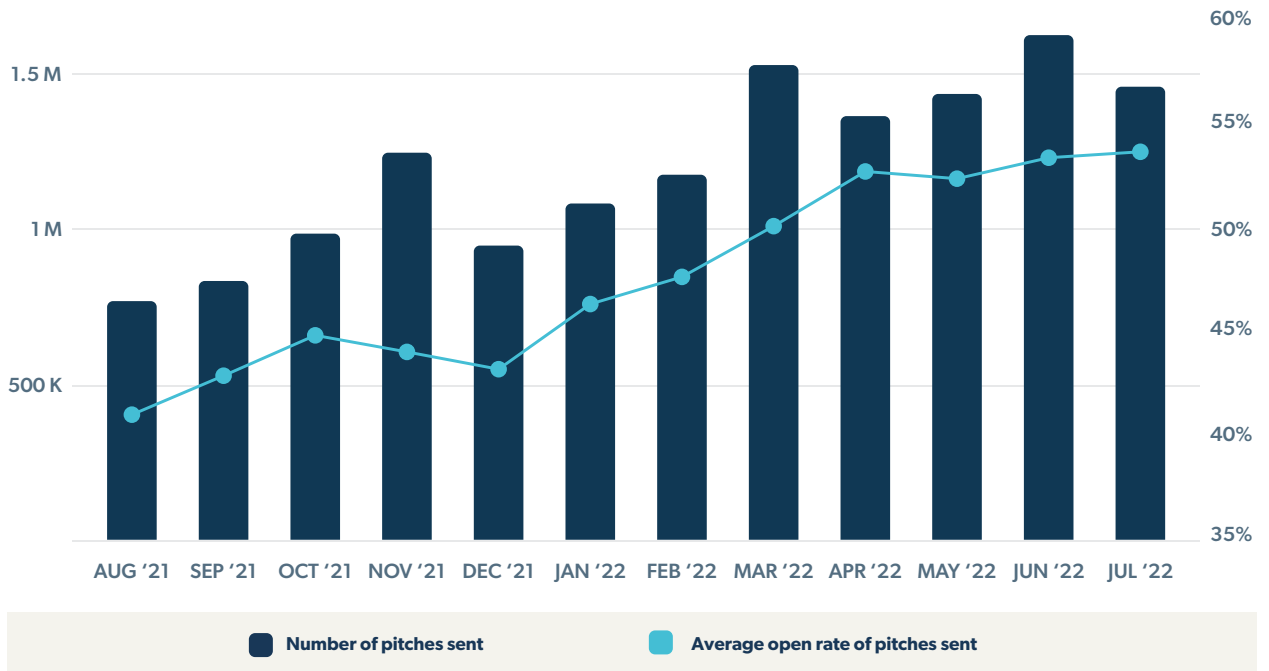
Takeaways:

- From an engagement perspective, it doesn't appear to matter which weekday you send your pitches out.
- If you'd like to decrease the level of competition you face in your target journalist's inbox, try pitching more on Mondays and Fridays, when the overall pitch volume is lower.
- If you'd like to increase journalists' feeling that we pay attention to their preferences, try pitching on Mondays. In [The State of Journalism 2022](#) survey, journalists ranked Monday as their preferred day to receive pitches.

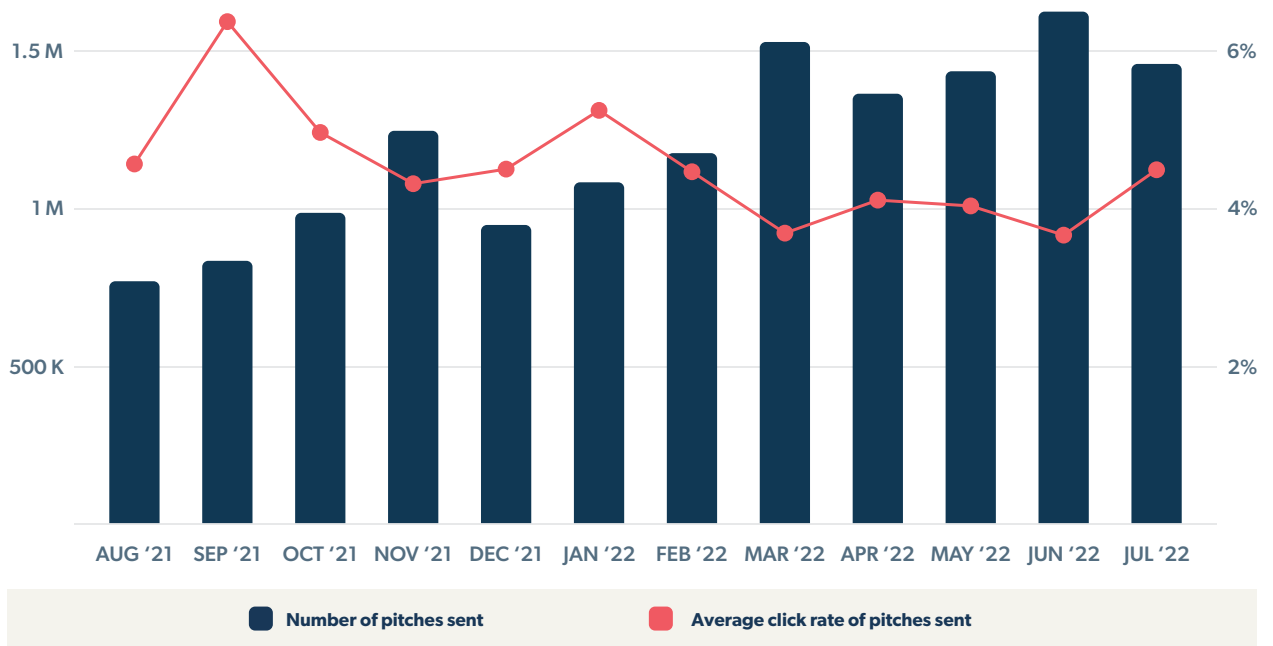
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How much does time of year affect pitching success?

PITCHES BY MONTH VERSUS AVERAGE OPEN RATE



PITCHES BY MONTH VERSUS CLICKTHROUGH RATE



Observations:

- The steady growth in pitch volume from the start of the study period to the end is most likely explained by Muck Rack's continued growth as a PR platform. More users means more pitches.
- After accounting for that user growth, pitch volume settled into more predictable patterns compared to last year, with an expected dip in pitches and engagement over the Christmas holidays. Last year's more erratic results must have been caused by COVID flukiness.
- The steady growth in open rates is most likely explained by the increasing use of privacy protections by email providers. These services "open" every email as part of their filtering process. This affects all email tracking, not just Muck Rack's. Therefore it's hard to draw any conclusions about open rates based on seasonality.
- Worst day of the year for both opens and clicks was the Sunday before Labor Day. Unsurprisingly, Memorial Day weekend was extra-low too. But holiday weekends weren't uniformly bad. The Sunday after Thanksgiving had a great average open rate compared to the rest of the year. Nothing like spending a weekend with relatives to make PR people look friendly and well-mannered.

Takeaways:

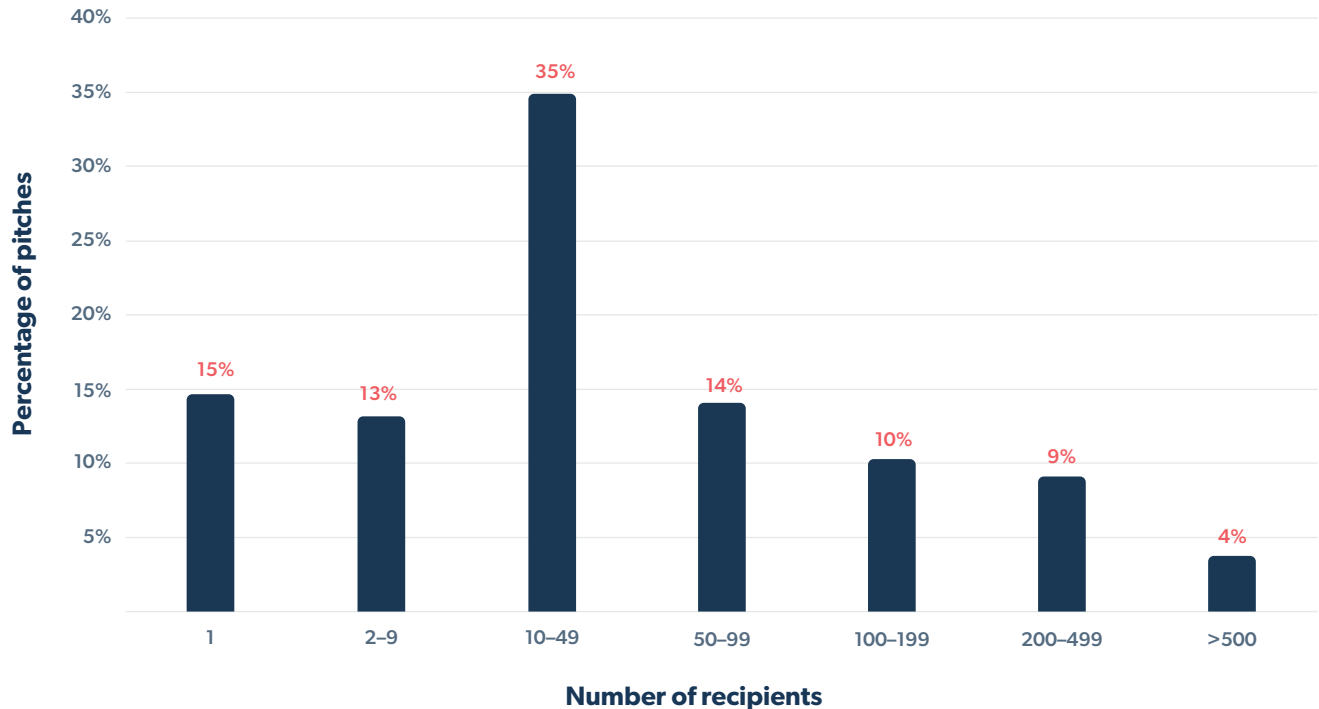
- These findings turned out to be pretty intuitive. There were no surprising seasonal impacts on pitch effectiveness.
- One experiment you could try would be pitching the week between Christmas and New Year's. Yes, fewer journalists are working, but your competition in their inboxes goes WAY down.

3

Narrowly targeting vs. larger blasts – does it really matter?

The short answer is yes. It matters a lot.

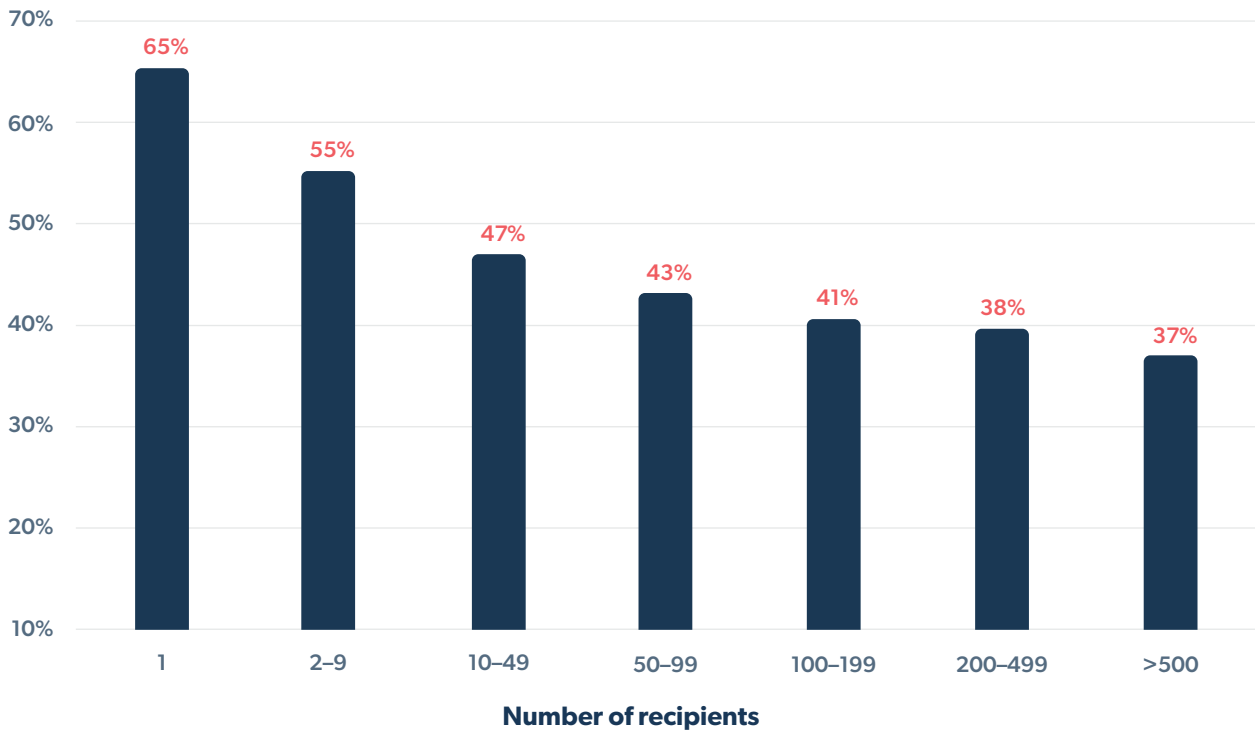
PERCENTAGE OF PITCHES BASED ON NUMBER OF RECIPIENTS



The median number of recipients was 28. That means half of all pitches had 28 or fewer recipients. That’s higher than last year, when the median was 20 recipients.

As PR people, we’re a friendly group. But when it comes to your email list, a “more-the merrier” philosophy is misguided. Instead, imagine your email list for each pitch as an exclusive new club. Only the hippest, trendiest people should be invited. And by hip and trendy, we mean “journalists narrowly focused on your target audience for this particular pitch.”

OPEN RATES STILL DROP AS YOU ADD MORE RECIPIENTS TO YOUR EMAIL



Observations:

- It makes sense that the more tightly focused your email is on its intended recipients, the more effective it will be.
- Obviously the highest engagement comes when you send a one-to-one personalized message.
- The variance starts to flatten out after you add the 50th recipient or more to your pitch distribution.

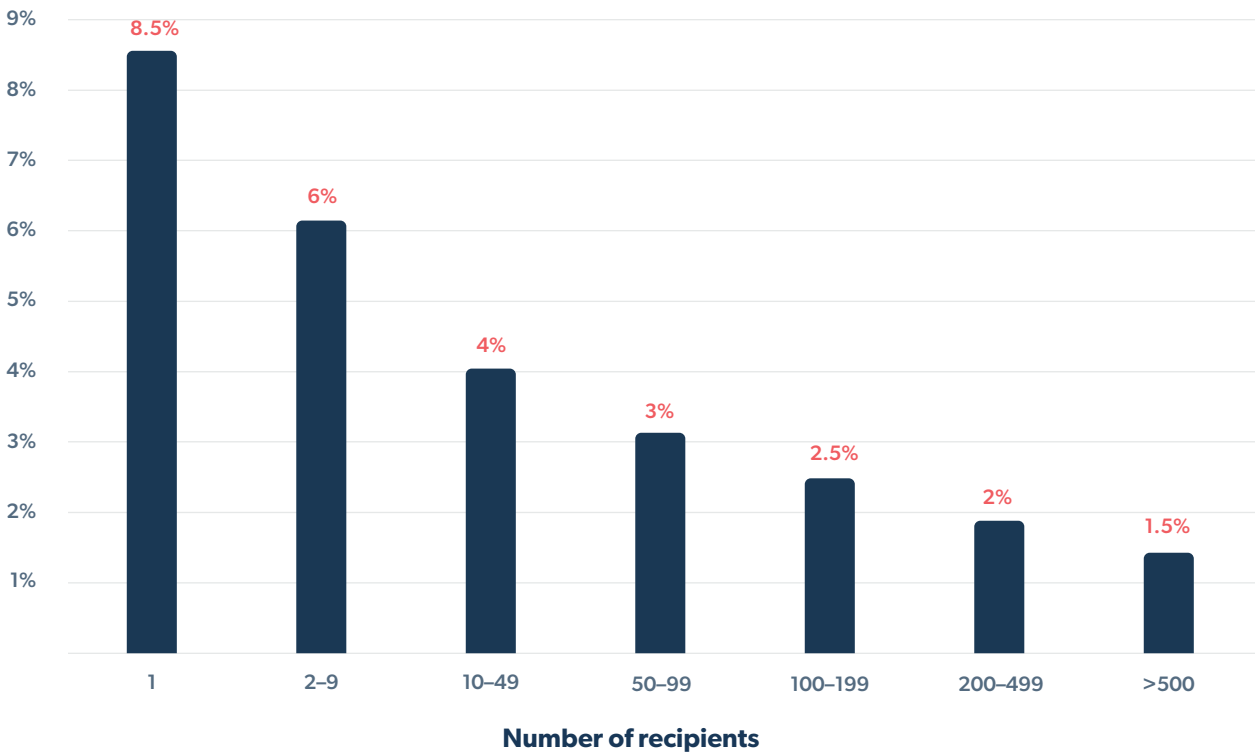
Takeaways:

- If you're looking for justification for shortcuts, you might be tempted not to stop at 100 recipients and go ahead and add about 400 more. Resist this temptation. It's true you'll get close

to the same open rate on average. But you'll also get many more misfires and possibly get [flamed on Twitter](#).

- The best use of this result is to show it to your boss or client to defend your practice of relying on very small distributions, focusing especially on 1:1 emails. No surprise, that's the pitching method preferred by 94 percent of journalists, as reported in [The State of Journalism 2022](#).

CLICKTHROUGH RATES DROP EVEN FASTER THE MORE PEOPLE YOU ADD TO THE DISTRIBUTION



Disclaimer: Why are we using clickthrough rate as a metric for pitching success?

It's true: most pitches aren't designed to drive a click, but rather a response. Therefore this isn't a metric we're saying you should rely

on. In fact, the clickthrough data this year for individual pitches was much more varied than it was last year, most likely a consequence of the heightened impact of privacy measures discussed in the methodology section above. All that said, when we look at huge chunks of emails all together, we can see unmistakable patterns.

Observations:

- Journalists are much more likely to engage with pitches sent to tightly grouped segments than they are with mega blasts.
- As was the case last year, click rates drop even faster than open rates when you add more recipients.

Takeaways for building your lists based on both open rates and CTR:

- The data proves that customizing one-off pitches is absolutely more effective at driving journalist engagement.
- If you send your typical pitches to 100 recipients, versus sending individual pitches to one recipient at a time, statistically speaking:
- Your open rate will be more than one-third lower
- Your CTR will be almost THREE TIMES lower
- Those ratios are worse this year than last – as PR pros send more pitches and journalists get further stretched, the gap is only going to widen.

We know it's more work to reach out individually. You may be saying, "I don't have time for that nonsense." And funnily enough, that's exactly what journalists say as they delete your blast email.

4 What can we learn from individual subject lines with high open rates?

Three observations were the same as last year, so we won't go into much detail reviewing them here. As a quick refresher, they are:

- There is no correlation between how you capitalize a subject line and results. Just like yelling at someone doesn't make them listen to you, writing a subject line in all caps does not make them open your email more than others. Neither does writing in all lower case. Neither does capitalizing just the first letter of each word. How you choose to capitalize your subject line matters as much as what flavor gum you're chewing when you send your email.
- Subject line length matters less than you think. We know this continues to be a surprise, but there were plenty of long subject lines among top performers - one was even 46 words long! (details later). Last year's top performers averaged 10 words, which meant that half were longer than 10.
- You're trying too hard. Although PR pros dream of crafting the most clever and fun subject lines, and often spend hours working on them, the ones that consistently populate our most-opened lists are those that are clear and direct.



Here are additional observations and best practices that emerged this year:

Leading with a time element

People like things that are new. Even if they're basically exactly the same as something old, their newness gives them appeal (I'm looking at you, Marvel Cinematic Universe). Even more than the rest of us, journalists have an insatiable appetite for timeliness. When you've got a timely story, don't be shy. Put your time element right at the front of the subject line.



SUBJECT

Back to School: Here are a few healthy snack and lunchbox options!



SUBJECT

LAUNCH: Sleep Sounder with [brand]'s New Nightcap



SUBJECT

Advance: Amazon Fresh Stocking [brand] Plant Based Foods Nationwide



SUBJECT

Premiering Next Week: [streaming platform]'s [show title]

Storytelling

When you don't have a strong time element, you can sometimes overcome that with a strong story. Use your subject line to tease the narrative elements.



SUBJECT

Teenager saves father's life on the golf course

This pitch is actually about Sudden Cardiac Awareness month. But the writer used “real people” for the subject line, which is a lot more interesting than another fundraising initiative associated with an awareness month.

**SUBJECT**

This Female AAPI Founder Turned \$12K into \$12 Million in Just 2 Years and Is Favorited By Google Design and Slack

The pitch is about the founder’s company and the service it offers. But that’s both promotional AND evergreen, so the writer wisely turns the founder into the heroine of a great story instead.

**SUBJECT**

This Italian Palazzo Comes with a Personal Tailor

Despite my Italian heritage, I had to google “palazzo” (sorry, Nonna). It means “large place of residence,” and in this pitch refers to a boutique hotel. Whatever it means, it comes with a personal tailor! Definitely something I want to at least open an email and read about.

Simple newsjacking subject line**SUBJECT**

Windows 11 Launch today - [brand] analyst comment

This is a textbook newsjacking pitch and had a high open rate. We’re surprised we didn’t see more pitches like this. Offering qualified comment on predictable breaking news is the Tom Cruise of subject lines – reliably successful.



5 What are some templates or formulas that **users and teams** seem to be using consistently for success?

Last year we looked only at the highest ranked pitches. This year we also ranked users and teams by open rate. This allowed us to analyze the most successful pitching pros and see the repeatable patterns they used. Here's what we learned:

Segment your list to target more narrowly, yet efficiently

It helps me if I imagine Monica from Friends [categorizing her towels](#) when I segment my media list: fancy, guest, fancy guest, and so on.

One user stands out for breaking their media lists up into segments and adjusting the subject lines to appeal to a specific audience of journalists. For example:



SUBJECT

Visit [destination]: 2022 News & Intro - Midwest Road Trip Destination



SUBJECT

Visit [destination]: 2022 News & Intro: Midwest International Food Destination

Sent about the same time, the above two pitches include most of the same information, just emphasized differently. The first pitch goes to journalists whose readers or viewers could feasibly drive to the market. The second to international travel media who've shown an interest in food and dining.



SUBJECT

Interview available on follow-up flu outbreak story at U of M



SUBJECT

Interview available on follow-up flu outbreak story at U of F



SUBJECT

Interview available on follow-up flu outbreak story at U of RI

The above set of pitches cleverly define a local angle for an evergreen story - the user's association client has an informational healthcare asset that's relevant to college students. The user must have googled "colleges undergoing a flu outbreak," and then tweaked each pitch for outlets in those "sick" schools' markets.

The same user shows us a similarly genius way to localize another story:



SUBJECT

Evansville resident sharing story of his rare disease to help others



SUBJECT

South Bend mother sharing story of son's rare disease to help others



SUBJECT

Fort Wayne area resident sharing story of son's rare disease to help others



SUBJECT

Indy ER nurse shares story of his rare disease to help others

Each pitch is exactly the same, except for one sentence that details the "resident" teased in the subject line. The client is an Indianapolis treatment center for the disease.

Big props to this user for not simply blasting one patient story to the whole state subject-lined “Indiana resident sharing story of rare disease . . .”

For B2B, go niche and direct



SUBJECT

[Ad agency] Signs Director [name]



SUBJECT

[Different ad agency] Signs Director [different name]



SUBJECT

[Ad agency] Doubles Down on DP turned Director [name]

From the annals of “clear is the new clever,” here’s a user that’s secure enough in their own success to go with “boring is the new clever.” If you’re trying to impress people, you would overthink this, add more words, and try to use a pun. If you’re trying to get results, you should stick with this formula that works.

The key, we surmise, is the tightly focused media list they craft for each pitch, which varies between 6 and 14 recipients. You and I probably wouldn’t recognize the names of the directors in these announcements (and there were about a dozen more just like these). But the user knows the writers at the niche B2B outlets they’re pitching will, and it works.



If you've got it, flaunt it – leading with recognizable brand



SUBJECT

Introducing [label]'s New [name] Collection



SUBJECT

Upcoming Collections from [label]



SUBJECT

[Popular floral brand] // Founder [name]'s Tips for decorating your home this spring!



SUBJECT

[Popular floral brand]: REENVISIONING THE FLORAL INDUSTRY



SUBJECT

[Brand] Deal- 25% Off [core product] Now

Recognizable is relative. The redacted brands in these examples aren't household names, but they're well known in their niches. And the users who pitch them know that the journalists on their distribution lists recognize them. So they lead with the brand in almost every subject line, to good effect.

The following subject lines come from a reliable source for studies and reports. You can see how the users on this team experiment with putting the brand at the beginning or the end, but they always include it in the subject line.



SUBJECT

New [brand] research – The state of employee computing in 2021, and Challenges of low-code citizen developer programs



SUBJECT

New [brand] research – Threat hunting 101; State of endpoint security 2022 (interested in copies?)

**SUBJECT**

What banks need to know about BNPL; Top emerging tech in banking 2022; Q4 2021 fintech funding (New [brand] research)

**SUBJECT**

Digital therapeutics – Where do their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats lie? (New [brand] research)

Not well known? Be creative and create new angles and time elements

Maybe your client isn't a household name. Maybe your client isn't even well known in their niche ... yet. That's where you come in. We love how creative this pro is while repping the same product with no news – it's a special type of pajamas for women.

**SUBJECT**

Supply chain woes aren't impacting American-made PJs

**SUBJECT**

Move over athleisurewear, sleepwear is redefining the work-from-home wardrobe

**SUBJECT**

Fill your suitcase with easy-to-pack, multi-purpose clothing

**SUBJECT**

These PJs aren't just good in bed

You can see how they figure out a way to tie into current events in the first two. And then a smart evergreen angle in the third (which relies on the PJs versatility to be worn during the day, too). And finally, a fun play on words - which you'll notice is the only "clever" example among our sample of high-performing pitches.

Tease the person behind the news – “meet”

These pitches come from a team that has clearly found a pattern for introducing their clients to the media. We mean, they literally introduce their clients to the media, complete with the word “meet.”



SUBJECT

Meet the man who owns 10 consumer product companies at 33 years old



SUBJECT

In honor of Women’s Month, Meet the Two Women taking over a Male Dominated Industry



SUBJECT

The Woman Behind the Jewelry Brand on the Hottest Magazine Covers

The standard for this sort of subject line should be: would you be excited to introduce this person at a party? You wouldn’t tell a friend, “Meet the guy who did something that’s not all that different or unique,” so don’t say that to a journalist. Find a different type of subject line that works better for your story.

Wily yet honest way to inject “re:” into subject line

Okay strap in, because we are going deep into PR nerdiness here to explain why this user’s ingenious hack works.

It’s natural that journalists are more likely to reply to emails that are part of an ongoing conversation. And some disingenuous PR pros actually manufacture the letters “Re:” at the beginning of COLD EMAIL subject lines to trick journalists into thinking they’ve already been corresponding on this topic in hopes they’ll open the cold

email. This makes as much sense as using someone else's photo for your Tinder profile. Sure you got a response, but what is your long term plan?

That's not what this user is doing here. They could just be taking advantage of the nice shorthand for "regarding" to save space. But we gotta suspect this clever PR pro is calculating that the presence of the letters "re:" may have a sort of subliminal effect on receiving journalists. We can't know because we haven't talked to them (these results are anonymous, after all). But either way, it's working.

**SUBJECT**

Segment idea RE: BBQ tips for grilling season

**SUBJECT**

Story idea Re: BBQ season 'how to' guide

**SUBJECT**

Segment RE: Apartments offering mental health-focused amenities (nat'l stress month)

**SUBJECT**

Story Re: New Apartments w/ Amenities For Reducing Stress

**SUBJECT**

TV segment Re: Father's Day gift guide for Texas Dads

**SUBJECT**

TV segment Re: Gift Ideas for Nashville Dads (Father's Day)

**SUBJECT**

Collab RE: Tequila event (5/21) + photoshoot + Father's Day/ date idea(s)

Tell 'em what you want (what you really really want)

A separate takeaway from this same set of successful subject lines above is the tactic of stating what you're proposing right at the beginning of the pitch: a segment, story, or collab.

I traditionally have discouraged pros from doing this, because I thought it wasted words on the most precious real estate right at the beginning of the subject line. But this user's success, plus the continued reality that longer subject lines seem to be opened at the same rate as shorter ones, is making me reconsider that advice.

Here's another example from a different user:



SUBJECT

Pool Pass? Experience [rooftop pool/terrace] at [boutique hotel name]

This tip falls under the category of: when you can give a journalist free access to a posh rooftop pool a few blocks from their outlet in NYC, you put that first in the subject line :).

Short CTA at the front, then details

I've been studying email pitching intensively for more than 20 years, and it's rare that I see anything truly innovative. Kudos to this user for trying something new that most PR pros would recoil from.

For context, it appears the user is a book publicist. And they begin each subject line with a really short call to action in the form of a question. Then they deliver a LONG thread of facts intended to boost credibility for the author or book. Don't get hung up on how long these are – the takeaway is the consistent use of the CTA at the beginning.

**SUBJECT**

need a copy? Hollywood's go-to holistic health guru || [Name] calls [author] her "spiritual Mother" & "a gift from the most high...Following her program, I learned what real food does to my body temple and how I can heal myself and create a peaceful life."

Yes, this subject line is 46 words. That's astounding and not the main point here.

**SUBJECT**

interview? || [name and nickname of personal finance expert || featured on GMA, TODAY, CNN, OWN, CBS & in NYT, WSJ, USA TODAY, COSMO, FORBES, FAST COMPANY

**SUBJECT**

interested? NYT bestselling author [name] calls [book title] (on sale 2/23) "a gift to parents and teenagers alike...[author] takes on one of the toughest times in all of parenting."

**SUBJECT**

on your radar? [author]'s [title] (on sale 4/13) || early praise from [three celebrities]

Last year we highlighted some subject lines that were similar in concept, but they were too short and too vague to be effective. Writing only "Story?" or "Interview?" didn't yield strong open rates. These examples above work because they also provide valuable info and context.

Unvarnished question



SUBJECT

How can one company offer lower crypto transaction fees?



SUBJECT

What is behind the growing demand for medical scribes?



SUBJECT

Can companies profit from traffic without intrusive ads? How?



SUBJECT

Are you part of the 20% with locked crypto?

One Muck Rack client appears to have trained everyone on their team to use this pattern when pitching an expert to comment on trends.

The pitches associated with these subject lines follow a template as well. They quickly explain the answer to the question, and then use a bulleted list of more detailed questions that their expert can answer. The entire pitch is about 100 words long.

Use with caution, as journalists often complain about teasers. This team uses this type of subject line all the time and enjoys a high average open rate. Perhaps journalists only dislike teasers about boring topics.



6 Who are the most pitched journalists in Muck Rack?

Thirty-seven of the Top 40 most-pitched journalists in Muck Rack have one specific thing in common.

TOP 40 MOST-PITCHED JOURNALISTS ON MUCK RACK OVER THE LAST 12 MONTHS

1	Alexis Bennet ECOMMERCE EDITOR, VOGUE	16	Jasmine Gomez FREELANCE WRITER, WOMEN'S HEALTH
2	Macy Williams EDITOR, SHOP & MUST HAVE, POPSUGAR	17	Shelcy Joseph FREELANCE CONTRIBUTOR, POPSUGAR
3	Julia Webb COMMERCE & DIGITAL CONTENT EDITOR, VERIZON MEDIA, IN THE KNOW	18	Julie Tong COMMERCE EDITOR, VOGUE
4	Danielle Directo-Meston WRITER & EDITOR, THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER	19	Tiffany Dodson ASSOCIATE MARKET EDITOR, HARPER'S BAZAAR
5	Bernadette Deron AFFILIATE COMMERCE WRITER, AMERICAN MEDIA, US WEEKLY	20	Kylie Gilbert SENIOR LIFESTYLE EDITOR, DIGITAL, INSTYLE
6	Krista Jones ASSISTANT SHOPPING EDITOR, ESQUIRE	21	Daniel Boan ASSOCIATE MARKET EDITOR, SHOPPING, BUZZFEED
7	Mia Maguire SHOPPING & E-COMMERCE EDITOR, THE DAILY BEAST	22	Nerisha Penrose ASSISTANT EDITOR, ELLE
8	India Yaffe EDITORIAL ASSISTANT, POPSUGAR	23	Halie LeSavage RETAIL WRITER, HARPER'S BAZAAR
9	Heather Braga SHOPPING EDITOR, BUZZFEED	24	Tim Chan LIFESTYLE & MARKET EDITOR, ROLLING STONE
10	Rachel Dube CONTRIBUTING WRITER, BUZZFEED	25	Sophie Canon DIGITAL INTERN, NEW YORK POST
11	Karina Hoshikawa BEAUTY & WELLNESS MARKET WRITER, REFINERY29	26	Kayla Boyd SHOPPING EDITOR, BUZZFEED
12	Amanda Garrity ASSOCIATE LIFESTYLE EDITOR, TODAY	27	Lisa Cupido Fogarty FREELANCE WRITER, BUSTLE
13	Camryn LaSala COMMERCE EDITOR & WRITER, NEW YORK POST	28	Neha Tandon FREELANCE WRITER, WOMEN'S HEALTH
14	Celia Shatzman FREELANCE WRITER, FORBES	29	Mara Leighton COMMERCE REPORTER, BUSINESS INSIDER
15	Kim Duong FASHION & LIFESTYLE EDITOR, COSMOPOLITAN	30	Abby Kass EDITORIAL ASSISTANT & FREELANCE WRITER, THE PARENTS NETWORK, BUZZFEED

TOP 40 MOST-PITCHED OUTLETS ON MUCK RACK OVER THE LAST 12 MONTHS, CONT'D

31	Dominique Pariso WRITER, THE STRATEGIST	36	Melanie Aman MARKET EDITOR, BUZZFEED
32	Madeline Fass ASSOCIATE MARKET EDITOR, VOGUE	37	Elise Taylor LIFESTYLE WRITER, VOGUE
33	Ashley Phillips FASHION & BEAUTY EDITOR, BUSINESS INSIDER	38	Elana Fishman STYLE EDITOR, NEW YORK POST
34	Amanda Krause RETAIL WRITING INTERN, INSIDER	39	Dale Chong FREELANCE WRITER, ELLE
35	Rachel Lapidos BEAUTY & FITNESS EDITOR, BUSTLE	40	Liza Corsillo STAFF WRITER, THE STRATEGIST

If you take the time to look at each of these journalists' Muck Rack pages to review their actual output (we did), you'll see that all but three of them cover products. More specifically, they primarily produce product round-ups with affiliate links, so that when readers purchase the spotlighted products, the media outlet receives a commission on every sale (usually in the range of 10-20 percent).

And the data are clear – journalists who do this type of work receive a ton of pitches. Probably because they are hunting for the newest and most appealing products that will generate the most revenue for their outlet.

Behind these product-focused journalists, there was no clear pattern as to which types of journalists receive more pitches than others.



7

Who are the most pitched outlets in Muck Rack?

TOP 50 MOST-PITCHED OUTLETS ON MUCK RACK OVER THE LAST 12 MONTHS

1	Forbes	18	Axios	35	Real Simple
2	The New York Times	19	People Magazine	36	Good Housekeeping
3	The Wall Street Journal	20	TODAY	37	CBS News
4	Business Insider	21	Hearst	38	Cosmopolitan
5	USA Today	22	Dotdash Meredith	39	The Daily Beast
6	Bloomberg News	23	Fox News	40	The Boston Globe
7	Associated Press	24	ABC News	41	CNET
8	The Washington Post	25	POLITICO	42	Yahoo
9	NBC News	26	Financial Times	43	Patch
10	CNN	27	Bustle	44	VICE
11	INSIDER	28	POPSUGAR	45	Daily Mail
12	CNBC	29	New York Magazine	46	Newsweek
13	Reuters	30	BuzzFeed News	47	Time Magazine
14	NPR	31	Fortune	48	Fast Company
15	HuffPost	32	The Guardian	49	CNN Business
16	Los Angeles Times	33	BuzzFeed	50	Vox
17	New York Post	34	Refinery29		

It may surprise you to see Forbes at the top of the list. But their number-one ranking might be explained by their giant army of contributors all over the world, who are associated within Muck Rack with Forbes but are more like freelancers.

You also might notice more lifestyle-driven outlets ranking higher than others. That's likely a function of the phenomenon noted above, where the journalists who do product round-ups are much more likely to entertain huge numbers of pitches than other types of journalists.

Summary of the biggest takeaways

- In contrast with last year, the time of year and day of the week that you pitch doesn't seem to affect engagement rates very much (with intuitive exceptions such as Sundays and holiday weekends leading to lower engagement).
- We'll keep saying it until our faces are as blue as the Muck Rack home page: the fewer people you target with each email pitch, the more likely they are to open it and engage with it.
- The most successful Muck Rack users continue to innovate new subject line patterns that boost their open rates – see lots of examples above.
- Shopping/commerce is fast emerging as the most-pitched type of media out there. The editors who put together those round-ups want their pick of the coolest products that they feel will drive their affiliate commissions. And PR pros who pitch products are more than happy to send them lots of pitches.



About the author

Michael Smart is the media relations coach and trainer brands and agencies turn to when they want to [improve their media pitching results](#). He's trained more than 10,000 communicators from teams at Lowe's, Intercontinental Hotels, St. Jude Children's Hospital and other companies of all sizes.

He's the instructor for Muck Rack Academy's free online certification, Fundamentals of Media Relations. [Take the quick, fun course to dig deeper into more pitching lessons.](#)

About Muck Rack

Muck Rack's Public Relations Management (PRM) platform enables thousands of organizations including Google, Knight Foundation, Pfizer, Golin, Zapier and Duolingo to build trust and tell their stories through earned media. Its media database curates hundreds of millions of data points to help PR teams find journalists, podcasters and content creators, generate coverage, monitor news and prove the value of their work. Journalists use Muck Rack's free tools to showcase their portfolios, analyze news about any topic and measure the impact of their stories. Learn more at muckrack.com.

