



synapse

Synapse Unwrapped: What We Learned From 4000 PR Pitches?

We analysed hundreds of stories to understand why
some got replies, and some didn't

300+

PR Pitches Analysed
Out Of 4000 Total

205+

Headlines Reviewed

430+

Journalist Requests
Tracked



What went wrong in 2025



Longer doesn't equal better

When we're sat in a room with journalists, 9 times out of 10, they are deciding whether or not to read a PR story in seconds, based only on the *headline*.

Headline character length and performance:



Under 50 Characters - *highest engagement*



50-100 Characters - *moderate engagement*



100+ Characters - *low engagement*

Emotion-led and vague framing underperformed

Pitch headlines that leaned heavily on excitement, vague quotes or brand enthusiasm consistently lost out to neutral, factual framing. Journalists wanted clarity and data.



41% of pitch headlines show a clear "how-to / discovery" tone



62% named a specific expert
OR an experts job title



34.1% of headlines mention a location or season (relevancy)

Clarity turned into data...



0.5%

Quotes

Rarely used; journalists prefer factual framing.



3.4%

Questions

Curiosity hooks feel vague.



15.1%

Superlatives

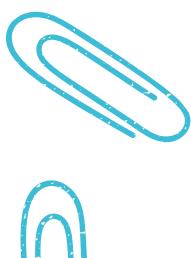
“Best”, “Top”, “Most” can create some urgency and authority, but can seem vague.



36.6%

Numbers

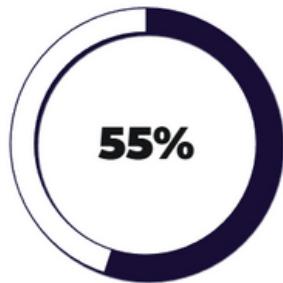
Clear listicles and data-led headlines signal structure and easy takeaways.



Pitching isn't the final step

You spend weeks and months coming up with a story idea, drafting the pitch, getting it signed off and then pitching.

But successful pitches on Synapse didn't end with a yes or no. They turned into *conversations*.



of pitches posted on Synapse had a journalist response -

but this wasn't always a straight out yes.



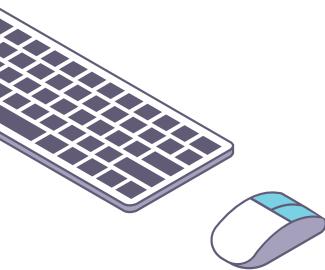
Strong majority of journalist requests were **accepted** but...



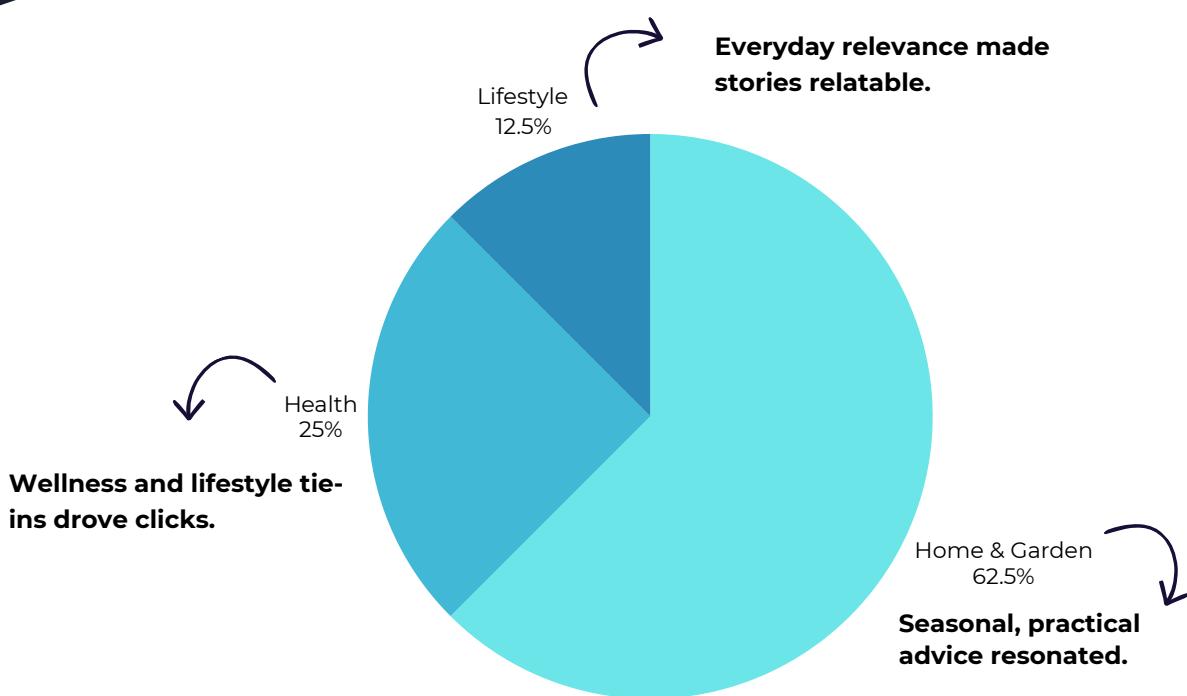
5.5 Messages



were then sent on average as PRs and media **worked together** to find the right stories and angles.



Sector Performance

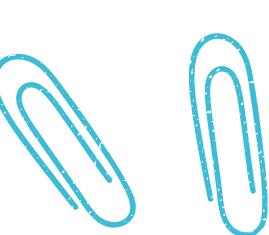


Key Insight:

These percentages reflect the sector tags on Synapse that saw the most activity in 2025 from journalist requests to PR stories.

In addition, **Business/Finance sector** remained consistent with trend-led insights that attracted attention.

Journalists want insightful, niche topics, especially within Lifestyle, Home and Garden, and Health, according to **numbers on Synapse**.



Winning headline formats... and when to use them

Examples of Winning Headlines

Format	Example	Why It Works
High scoring lists & specific numbers	Expert shares 4 ways to save on heating this winter	Sets clear expectations and promises concrete data - a story based on strong research
A how to	How to avoid the most common MOT mistakes drivers make	A “do this” action readers can follow easily is key for journalists
Named expertise	Personal finance experts shares why Gen-Z are avoiding banks	Instant credibility: a named expert (or job title) signals authority
Relevancy rooting via a location or season	Edinburgh based nutrition expert explains how to enjoy your burns supper on a diet	Makes the story timely and specific, location/season provides a stronger hook for journalists wanting to engage their audiences



Lessons for 2026

Checklist for Headlines



- Under 12 words
- Includes a "how-to" OR an expert whose expertise is made clear
- Clear benefit for journalists' audience
- If including data, the best numbers are included in the headline and are strong.

Questions to ask:

Before you send a pitch, ask yourself:

- Is the benefit to the journalists' audience clear in the headline?
- Does it respect a journalist's time?
- Is the story obvious without explanation?
- Would you click it if it wasn't your client?
- Would you understand it if you hadn't written it?
- Is it relevant to the current news cycle? Or where are we in the year?
- Have I focused on the strongest data points?
- Have I made the expertise of my experts clear to someone who hasn't heard of them?

Final Word

2025 taught us that journalists love a good story, but only when it comes from a pitch that is **short, targeted, and clear**.

- **Clarity beats chaos, always.**
- **Utility beats fluff.**
- **Personal connection beats email clutter.**

Synapse is evolving each time you engage with it, therefore we make PR and journalist workflows easier, faster, and smarter.

Thanks for being part of the Synapse community. Let's go into 2026 pitching smarter, not harder.



Voices from the Community

Bethan Williams, Senior Account Executive, Folk:

“Synapse allowed me to have a simple conversation... replacing the need for half a dozen emails.”

Emilia Kettle, Senior SEO Reporter, Newsquest:

“The request service is great... replies mostly in under an hour, sometimes pieces written in under ten minutes.”

Cheryl Crossley, Head of PR, iDHL:

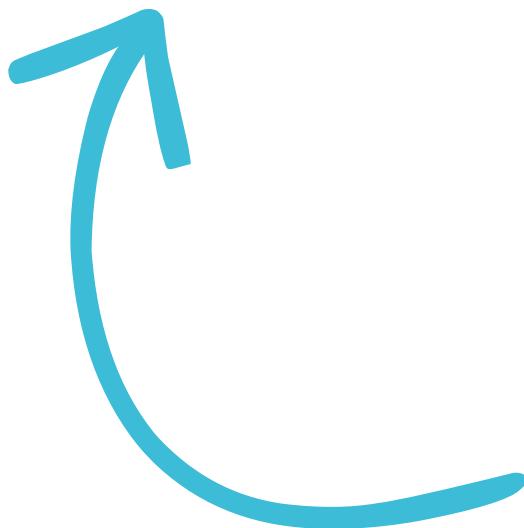
“Synapse took the stress out of pitching and saved me so much time and effort.”

Samantha Hall, Mabo (PR):

“My team have all found Synapse to be a great asset to our digital PR strategy.”

Taylor Brammer, Journalist:

“Synapse has massively enhanced our relationship with PRs.”



Synapse's impact, is best captured in the words of those who used it