



**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+**

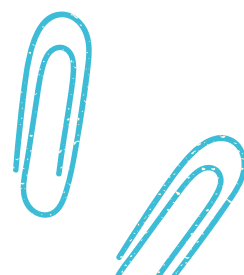
PR Pitches Analysed  
Out Of 4000 Total

**205+**

Headlines Reviewed

**430+**

Journalist Requests  
Tracked





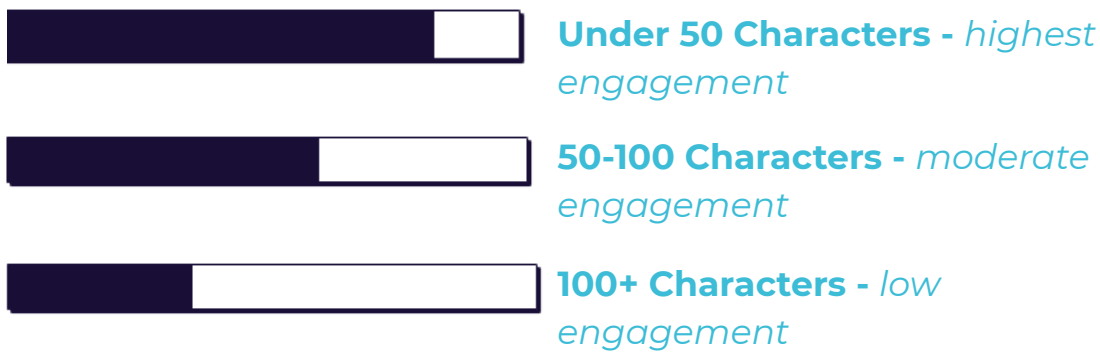
# What went wrong in 2025



## 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:



## 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%

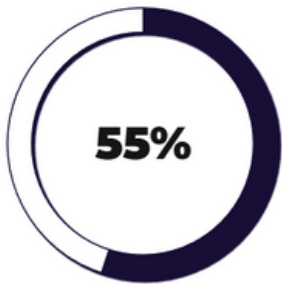
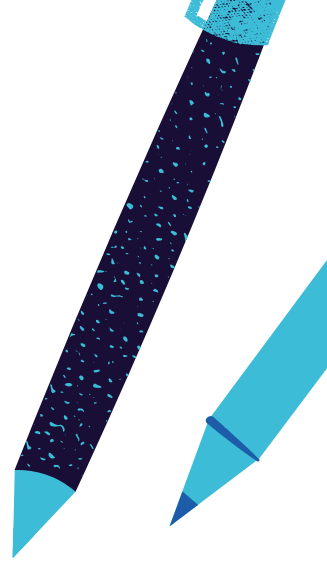
### Numbers

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.

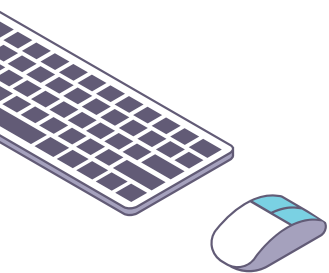


Strong majority of journalist requests were **accepted** but...

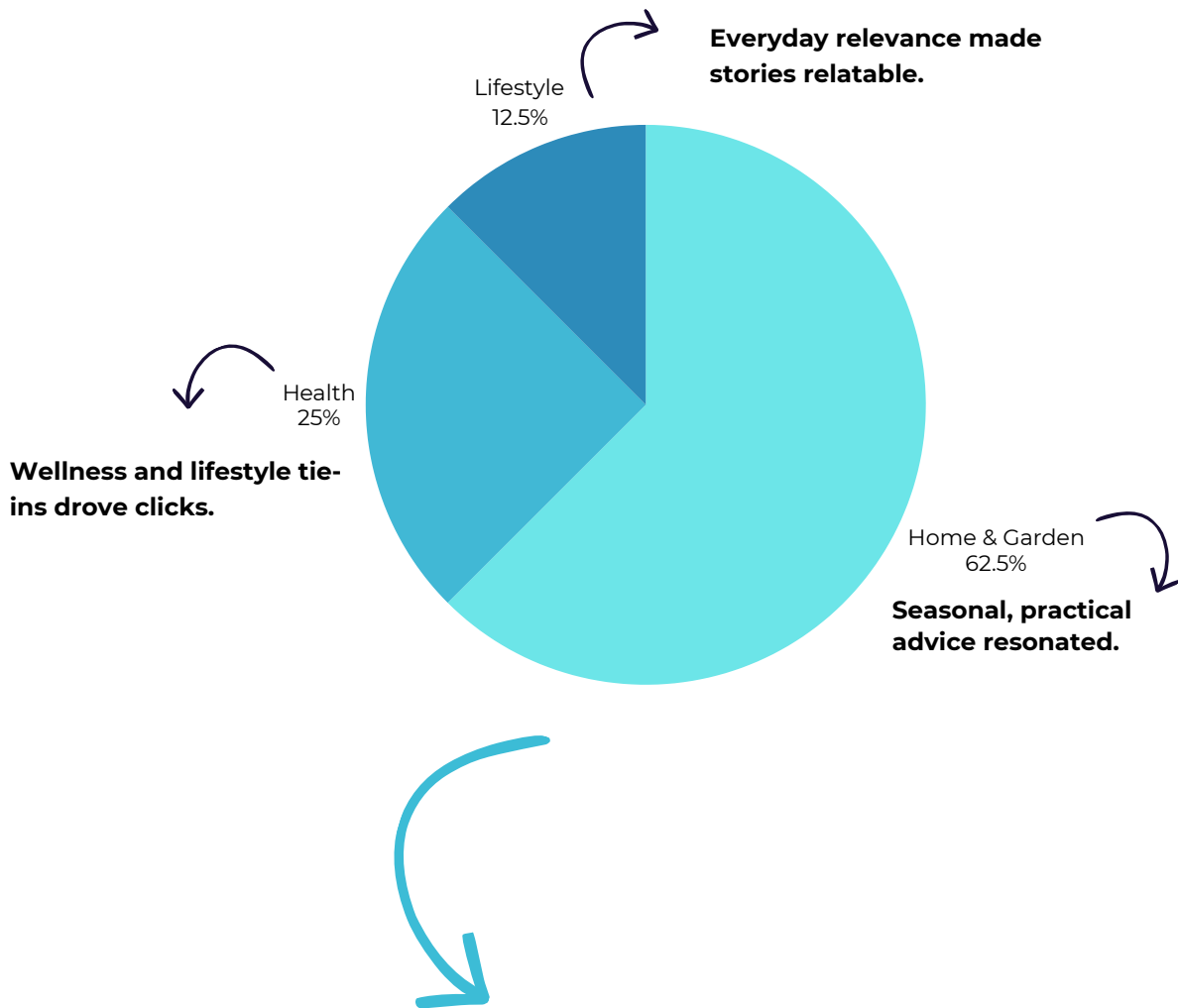


### 5.5 Messages

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



## Sector Performance

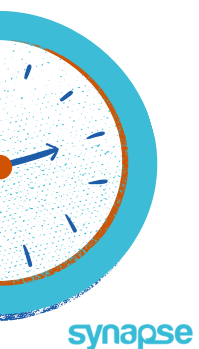


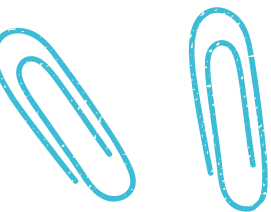
### Key Insight:

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

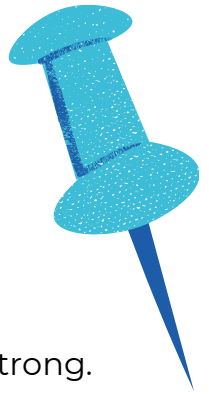
Format	Example	Why It Works
<b>High scoring lists &amp; specific numbers</b>	Expert shares 4 ways to save on heating this winter	Sets clear expectations and promises concrete data - a story based on strong research
<b>A how to</b>	How to avoid the most common MOT mistakes drivers make	A “do this” action readers can follow easily is key for journalists
<b>Named expertise</b>	Personal finance experts shares why Gen-Z are avoiding banks	Instant credibility: a named expert (or job title) signals authority
<b>Relevancy rooting via a location or season</b>	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**

