

Insider Tips for a Successful Media Pitch Created by Angela Barrett

1. Know who you are pitching to and who their audience is.

You'd be surprised at how many people - including public relations experts - who send a media/press release to newspapers, magazines, radio and TV that is out of alignment with the publication/media outlet, their values and their target audience. By this I mean sending a release about something that simply doesn't interest their audience. This generates frustration on both sides as the 'pitcher' becomes disappointed by the lack of interest and the editors become frustrated with yet another release that misses the mark.

Insider tip:

Research the media you are targeting. Get a feel for the way they write, speak, present their pieces. Check their website to get an understanding of who their target audience is. It's a waste of your precious time and energy trying to force your offering onto people who are not interested. Find media outlets who will value the work you are doing. Identify specific individuals (or specific programs - eg, radio lifestyle/relationship programs) within those organisations who write or speak about relationships. Look up their contact details online and send your media release directly to them.

2. Find a hook.

The media like to use stories that are relevant/timely to an occasion or event so relate your media release to something going in the wider community.

Insider tip: Identify days/times on the calendar - eg, Valentine's Day, Spring - that are relationship-relevant or an event like a singles expo, and connect you/your offering to that occasion. For example, when Valentine's Day is coming up chances are some singles will be feeling the pain of the lack of romantic love, so offer the media some tips/advice for how to deal with that.

Bonus tip: Don't infer that booking sessions with you is The Only Solution! Include your coaching services as one course of action, but aim to give good value to their audience in what else you provide. The media quickly turn off if they think you are simply wanting to promote your business without giving good value to their audience.

3. Make it as easy as possible for them to use your information.

Journalists and presenters are often looking for an interesting, well-presented, easy-to-use stories.

Insider tip: Be sure to include all the basics - who, what, when, where and why - and answer all those basic questions within what you write. Include the date at the top and your contact details very prominently at the bottom. Present it so well that it's hard for them *not* to use it.

4. Check it well before sending.

Journalists and editors can be easily put off by bad spelling and grammar - especially if you get the spelling of media outlet wrong or misspell the name of the person you are sending it to.

Insider tip: Get a well-read, well-informed friend to read it over and check for errors. Double check the spelling of the recipient's name and their organisation.

5. Lead with the best part.

Journalists are often time-poor and fickle. You want to grab their attention straight away, so don't bury the most interesting or relevant part in the middle of the press release, otherwise you risk them giving up before they get to the good part.

Insider tip: To help you decide what to include in your leading paragraphs, you want to elicit (from yourself) the main point you are wanting to make with this release then make that point clearly within the first two or three sentences. Ask yourself, "What I am wanting to say here? What is the main thing I want them to know?"

6. Be concise!

Repeat: Journalists are often time-poor and fickle! You don't have to say *everything* in your press release... and if you try, you risk them losing interest and moving on to the next press release, hoping for something more succinct and punchy.

Insider's tip: Keep your press release to one page or one computer screen depth. If you can't, definitely do not go any longer than two pages. The recipient can contact you if they want more information.

7. Check their deadline.

You don't want to miss out on an opportunity because you weren't aware of the deadline.

Insider tip: Think well ahead of time and contact the media outlet in advance to ask how long in advance they need your press release (if your release is linked to a particular occasion). Generally speaking, media with more immediacy - eg television and radio news programs, newspapers and weekly magazines - have shorter deadlines, meaning that you can send time-sensitive items two to four weeks before the event you are linking your press release to. Monthly magazines have longer deadlines, work three to four months in advance of an issue.

8. Don't take disinterest personally.

The media receives so many press releases from so many sources and they obviously can't use them all. If they don't use yours, there are many factors that might account for why it didn't make the cut: space, air time, not relevant enough, not hitting the spot. It does not necessarily mean you're not good enough.

Insider tip: Treat it as a learning experience that you can grow from. If you know anyone who works in the media, ask them for feedback about how you could have improved your press release/approach. Another option is to have a look online for expertly-crafted press releases issued by large, successful businesses and use them as a guide and for ideas on how to structure and write yours. Learn from the experts!

Writing a Press Release:

<http://www.marketingdonut.co.uk/pr/writing-a-press-release/a-complete-guide-to-writing-an-effective-press-release>

<https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/press-release-template-ht#sm.000061s8bvf5jdgms8c2fqj6yeahc>