

Press Release – The Pitch

I. What is a Media Pitch?

A media pitch is a short communication, typically an email or direct message, suggesting a news story to a journalist or editor at a publication, radio station or broadcast network. The goal of a pitch is to generate coverage and determine if your media contact is interested in creating a story around the content.

II. Think Like a Journalist

No matter what beat they report on, journalists want to tell stories that will reach the widest audience possible. To do that, they tend to focus on stories that contain some combination of specific themes. These are called **news values**.

If you want a writer to accept your pitch, it needs to intrigue them—and be something that satisfies the news values their readers are interested in.

While there are many different combinations of news values, most journalists and educators agree these are key:

1. **Timeliness.** Journalists are looking for stories that are trending, relevant of the moment, or shed new light on what everyone's already talking about.
2. **Impact.** Does the story you're pitching impact a large number of people? Does this news greatly affect an industry that's relevant to the journalist's readers? If so, then tell the journalist that upfront.
3. **Prominence.** How widely known is the subject of your story? If it's a person, are they a celebrity or public figure? Maybe the news concerns a government organization or a beloved national park.
4. **Proximity.** You know that old expression for when something affects us on a personal level- we say it "hits close to home." That's because news feels more intense, and immediate, when it happens close by. And this is why proximity has news value on its own. Pitching around proximity is a particularly helpful strategy when targeting journalists for local, community or regional outlets.

5. **Human interest.** Human interest, sometimes called novelty, describes putting an unusual or engaging spin on the world by telling a story of a person or people who are affected by the other aforementioned news values.

III. Personalization Matters

Writing the perfect pitch won't matter if you don't think strategically about who you send it to. Lack of personalization is the number one reason journalists reject pitches. A sportswriter doesn't want to write about an interior designer and an investigative journalist probably won't love a pitch about the 17 most popular items on Etsy.

More tips:

- ✓ Read each reporter's previous articles thoroughly
- ✓ Understand a writer's news values
- ✓ Put a personal twist on each email
- ✓ Include context on who you are
- ✓ Don't send mass emails

IV. How to Write a Media Pitch

Start with the subject line... since the subject line is the first thing a journalist sees in their already overflowing inbox, creating the perfect pitch based on the advice above will be a waste of time if your subject line is boring, confusing, or overdone.

- ✓ Be upfront and clear about what the email is about
- ✓ Keep it short and cut out unnecessary adjectives

What to include in your pitch? Your pitch should answer the Ws for your journalist: Who, What, When, Where and Why.