

How to pitch a news story to an editor

If you've written any type of news pitch before, you'll quickly realize that writing a media pitch is similar. There are, however, a few key differences that you have to keep in mind.

I've broken down writing a news pitch into 7, easy-to-follow steps:

Make sure your story is newsworthy

It's all in the subject line. If you want to get someone to cover your story, it's worth asking yourself these two questions before you even think about pitching the media outlet:

Is my news actually newsworthy?

Is my news presented in an exciting way that will get people interested?

The best pitch emails answer these questions with a resounding, “yes!” If not, it might be worth waiting until you have something that is actually newsworthy.

Also, when crafting a press release that you might send in a pitch, it is vital to take into account your target audience and the preferences of journalists from the outset.

For example, outstanding book press releases give readers an enticing glimpse of what lies ahead while avoiding spoilers while sports journalists need short, “tweettable” quotes and a set of statements from athletes.

Otherwise, you could make a bad first impression with the media contacts you send your press release.

What makes a newsworthy story? Consider the following:

Is the story new and current?

Does it feature an element of prominence?

Does it evoke an emotional response?

Will your story affect or have an impact on certain people?

Is your story relevant to the area/publication you are pitching it to?

Make sure you're pitching relevant media contacts

Before writing your news pitch, you should first find relevant media contacts to prepare a media list, which is a list of people who could be interested in covering your story. In addition to journalists, this could include social media personalities on LinkedIn, influencers, bloggers, podcast hosts, and even other PR Professionals.

In the media, individual journalists have their own specializations (referred to as a "beat"). Instead of sending your pitch to the general email address of a news outlet, it is best to address it to the person most relevant to the subject you're writing about. **In other words:**

make sure you're knocking on the right doors before you start knocking.

Example: If you're a small business or startup that's launching a new product and you're reaching out to a magazine like WIRED, Forbes, or the New York Times, you'll find out that every reporter there has their own specialization, such as drones, cell phones, or cloud computing. In this case, the right thing to do would be to reach out to the person that writes about products like yours, instead of pitching to someone that generally covers technology.

If you're using a media tool, you can identify relevant journalists by searching through the media database and using filters such as keywords in recent articles, industry, or location.

Write your subject line

When writing a media pitch subject line you want to keep in mind that this is your big first impression, this is the first thing your selected

journalists will see and you want it to make a mark and get your email opened.

So remember these simple rules:

Keep things clear

Simply put, be sure to say it is a pitch. You don't want to hide your email behind flowery language and get your pitch lost in a journalist's already overflowing inbox. So put the name right on the label to keep your intent clear and your pitch easy to find.

Keep things short

You might be tempted to dress up the subject line with extra buzzwords and enhancing language. I mean what's even better than a new product? *An exciting new product, of course!* But the subject line is simply not the place for it. A good guideline to keep in mind is you want to keep your subject line **under 49 characters, total**. Doing so is proven to **boost your open rates and more**.

Grab their attention early on

Let's start at the very beginning, the address line.

You want to address your pitch as precisely as you can, ideally with your journalist's name and professional titles. If you're using a media contact database this information should be in easy reach. "To whom it may concern," may have floated you once or twice, but it's a poor beginning to establishing meaningful relationships with your chosen journalists. That personal touch can work wonders.

This is also a good moment to double-check your chosen journalist's beat, or their field of expertise, to be absolutely sure you're pitching to the right person. Once you have that checked off the list, what next?

Get straight to the point

Your journalist is going to want to know the big W's: **Who, What, When, Where, and Why?**

So it's best to put these right up front. These should make up the content of your opening paragraph so **the journalist can be sure that your news covers their and your audiences' interests**. This is best encapsulated in a compelling lead that includes your trending topic and your timeframe. Remember, there's no news like fresh news.

Offer an appealing angle

By providing journalists with different options for how to cover a story, you increase the chances that they will find an angle that fits their publication's style and target audience, and thus you'll be more likely to gain press coverage.

Write an email that connects

You want to write content that the journalist can see will resonate with their readers. You want to make sure that you and the journalist are on the same page, and that the journalist has ready angles that they can use to frame your story to their readers.

Trust me when I say that journalists love it when PRs do some of their work for them. But there are a few things that you can do to make sure your news really stands out amongst media pitches:

Give them expert sources

What did we say about doing the journalist's work for them? Your chosen journalist may well have their own expert sources in mind, but the more the merrier! You may even find a few that are truly unique to your article, such as academic experts or a CEO, that can grant your story extra strength.

Send them relevant links

Generally speaking, you don't want to bog down your pitch with excessive graphs and data, but you can still include these with carefully chosen external links related to your news. This can increase reader engagement and enhance your credibility, both with your journalist and their audience.

Tell them what you're offering

You've already gone through the trouble of hand-picking what journalist and news outlet to pitch, so why not share why you chose them? Mentioning your criteria and why you chose to pitch them exclusively can help personalize your pitch and reinforce your relationship.

Make your call to action

A carefully crafted call to action is an absolute must. Ideally, you want to express why this story matters, how it is relevant to your journalist's readers, and reinforce your timing. This is your moment to keep things focused on your audience, your journalist, and their readers.

Conclude your news pitch

Your conclusion should be a boiled-down summary of your pitch but presented in reverse. You can begin by restating your call to action in a fresh and unique way, adding any last relevant data or links that the

journalist might find useful, and finally thanking your media contact for their valuable time. Remember to use a unique and polite sign-off and, finally...

End on your boilerplate

You know what this is. In the end, you want an easy and accessible summary of all your essentials. Your contact details, your background, why you're the perfect person to pitch this news, and any professional achievements relevant to your pitch and your news.