

How to pitch a story to the media

So you've written your media release and now you want to get some love in the media. Here are some key things to remember when pitching to our friends in the media.

The golden rule of respect for our friends in the media – know your product:

- If you don't know the media outlet's product, learn about it before you pitch any ideas: read, listen and watch.
- Journalists and presenters know when you have no idea about their magazine/column/show, and they are generally too busy to give you a second chance. Have some respect for their art by not wasting their time and they will love you for it.

Choose wisely:

- Following on from the previous point, target the media practitioners who are already writing/talking about similar things. Think about genre shows on community radio, or 'local people doing good things' stories in The Messenger papers.
- **An example:** If you have a metal band, DO NOT call FiveAA and ask them to play your music. DO call Powersurge on Three D Radio. Similarly: if you have a folk band, The Folk Show on Radio Adelaide would love to hear your stuff. Probably not 5ebi's Ethiopian language hour... unless you play Ethiopian folk music, which would be cool.
- Don't put your media release out to EVERY. SINGLE. OUTLET. Nobody likes getting a group email that treats him or her like they are not special.

Know what is 'newsworthy':

There are some guidelines to what is considered newsworthy. Check them out below:

- 1. Timing:** The word news means exactly that - things which are new. Topics that are current are good news. Consumers are used to receiving the latest updates, and there is so much news about that old news is quickly discarded.
- 2. Significance:** The number of people affected by the story is important. A plane crash in which hundreds of people died is more significant than a crash killing a dozen. Think of how your pitch is significant to loads of people.
- 3. Proximity:** Stories that happen near to us, or have a link to our location, have more significance. Think about how much the local news LOVES Sia, because of her link to Adelaide. A local band releasing an album would have more interest to the media than the same level band in Perth. The Messenger Newspapers try to only write about people in their distribution area.
- 4. Prominence:** Famous people get more coverage just because they are famous. If you break your arm it won't make the news, but if the Queen of England breaks her arm it's big news.
- 5. Human Interest:** Human interest stories are a bit of a special case. They often disregard the main rules of newsworthiness; for example, they don't date as quickly, they need not affect a large number of people, and it may not matter where in the world the story takes place. People's unique stories are interesting to the masses. Try figuring out your special story and then tagging your news at the end of it. For instance, if you wrote your entire album whilst saving children from an earthquake in Peru... the story pitch is you saving children in Peru, the tagline is the album that came out of it.