



TO PITCH OR RELEASE

The Internet has, without question, provided more opportunities and better communication between the media and business owners. However, it has also encouraged an onslaught of press releases for which the media simply can not keep up. This means, that you, the business person must either deliver press releases so compelling that they will shine through the proverbial slush pile, or find a better approach for reaching your target editors or producers.

For the very same reason that the personal approach works so well on the Internet with consumers is the same reason it works well with editors and producers. Press releases are without a doubt the easier route. Simply write and click send then sit back and hope someone with a valuable title will notice. The hard truth is that getting a press release noticed is becoming more and more of a challenge. Unless you happen to like standing in a very long line and hoping an editor will dig through a very deep slush pile to notice your news, may I suggest a more direct, successful approach to garnering press space? The pitch.

The pitch requires a little more work, research, and preparation but also nets better results. The pitch is really only a verbal press release. If you can get the phone date, you have a better chance of being heard, of personalizing the story, and therefore getting the much coveted time in the media spotlight.

Publicists have long understood the value of the pitch and in fact, the pitch is the number one reason publicists are paid the big bucks. Do they have something you do not have? No. It's a tool anyone can learn to hone. Will you mess up a few pitches? Yes, without a doubt just the same way you messed up a few press releases. The difference is that you didn't hear about it with your press release, which in reality did not help you. It is a tool that will require constant improvement but the rewards and both personal and professional.

So what does a pitch consist of? A pitch contains all the same information that a press release requires but you present it in a less formal way, over the telephone, directly to the editor or producers. It's important that you take the time to prepare your pitch and be able to discuss it without reading it. Research the publications, radio shows, or television spots to be sure that your particular story will fit in with their theme and then either write, email, or call for an appointment to present your story.

Not only does the pitch personalize your story and make you real for the editor or producer but you will also begin to build contacts within the media. These contacts will eventually become professional friends that will smooth the road to greater and greater media opportunities.

Once you have delivered your pitch, asked for a time or space slot, don't forget to thank the editor or producer both in the conversation and in writing. Be courteous and respectful at all times. Never try to talk and editor or producer into your story, as they know their market better than you do. If you get a rejection ask for a referral to a more appropriate market and keep trying.

Yes, press releases definitely have their place. A consistently distributed press release will keep you in the eye of the media, which can pave the way to a more productive pitch. So in affect, using both tools is the best approach. One is definitely weaker without the other, but together they make an impact that can't be beat.

Overall, it's persistence that wins in the long run and this is a quality every publicist has. However, you can learn the ability of persistence simply by practicing it. Keep at it and before long you will be a media hit!

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