

FORTHRIGHT CHECKLIST: Pitching Reporters With Success

One email is all it takes. Through that one email, you can begin building a strong relationship with a key journalist, or accidentally alienate a reporter (no pressure!). But never fear, we've got your back. We're sharing our quick pitching checklist to ensure you've got a strong media pitch that lands.

- ❑ MY PITCH IS NEWSWORTHY, AND THEREFORE FITS INTO ONE OF THESE SIX CATEGORIES (CHECK AT LEAST ONE):
 - ❑ **Timely:** This is news right now or very soon. It's breaking news, related to a holiday, new data, special event, etc.
 - ❑ **Human interest:** It's warm and fuzzy, good news, the soft side of reporting (think of the last story you read that made you go "aww").
 - ❑ **Local interest:** This MATTERS to people who live in your city/county/area.
 - ❑ **Superlative:** Your organization/leader is the first to do something—or the best—or the only.
 - ❑ **Conflict and controversy:** Your story highlights differences within the community, an important community debate, a big problem, etc.
 - ❑ **Helpful:** You're sharing tips, top lists, the best way to do something.
- ❑ I'VE CHOSEN THE RIGHT MEDIA OUTLET TO PITCH.
 - ❑ This outlet reports about the kind of story I'm pitching.
 - ❑ My target audience definitely reads this publication.
- ❑ I'M SENDING MY PITCH TO A REPORTER WHO WRITES ABOUT THIS TOPIC.
 - ❑ I double checked that they still write about it and still work for this publication. (Pro tip: Reporters switch beats and jobs frequently as they develop in their careers!)
- ❑ MY SUBJECT LINE WILL INTEREST THE JOURNALIST ENOUGH TO OPEN MY EMAIL.

Bad example: "You should interview my executive director."
Good example: "Tip About Tomorrow's 10 a.m. Education Council Hearing."

- ❑ I'VE DONE MY RESEARCH AND AM PERSONALIZING MY MESSAGE.
 - ❑ I'm spelling the reporter's name right, and I'm writing content that shows them this email is directly for them! (Pro tip: mention one of their stories you found particularly interesting. For example, "I read your article about truancy in DC's schools earlier this year. That's why I wanted to reach out about next Monday's "Improving School Attendance: Truancy, Chronic Absenteeism, and the Implementation of Reform Initiatives" hearing at DC City Council.")
- ❑ I'VE INCLUDED THE WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY AND HOW OF MY STORY.
 - ❑ The reporter has all the details they need to follow up.
- ❑ THE NEXT STEP IS CLEAR, AND MY CONTACT INFORMATION (ALL OF IT!) IS EASY TO FIND.
 - ❑ The reporter should be able to respond to me by email, call, text or carrier pigeon.
 - ❑ I am checking my email and phone frequently. Reporters often need a fast response.
- ❑ I KNOW THE MEDIA OUTLET'S DEADLINES AND AM GIVING THE REPORTER ENOUGH TIME TO PREPARE THE STORY.
 - ❑ For broadcast or radio: If I'm calling to follow up, I'm not doing that right before or during their segment. (Pro tip: Reporters DO NOT like that!)

BONUS ROUND

- ❑ IF THE PITCH WAS SUCCESSFUL AND THE REPORTER COVERS MY STORY, I ACKNOWLEDGE IT!
Saying thank you or telling a reporter how much you enjoyed working together can go a long way.



READY TO TAKE YOUR MEDIA RELATIONS STRATEGY TO THE NEXT LEVEL?

We can help! Forthright Advising works across the country with organizations that love kids. From creating media strategies from scratch to refining your team's interview skills, we can ensure your organization is ready for the next big story. Find us online at www.forthrightadvising.com or email us today at katie@forthrightadvising.com.



SMART COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES FOR ORGANIZATIONS THAT LOVE KIDS