

HOW TO GET PR

In this guide, we'll cut to the chase and give you the lowdown on PR.

Common misconceptions about PR:

- **PR is hard**
Wrong! PR can be very simple and depending on the extent and quality of your coverage, insanely valuable.
- **You need to use a PR agent to get coverage**
Nope. Sometimes they can be useful but generally only in very specific niche industries. Even in these industries, they are not essential.
- **Journalists don't like talking to you directly**
Sometimes they are busy, sure, but the good journalists actually prefer speaking with sources directly rather than via a spin-doctor.
- **Quantity is what matters**
Not any more. These days, a few selected Bloggers do you more good than hundreds of happy snaps in the social pages.
- **Bloggers aren't worth it**
Wrong – think about where YOU get your reviews if you are considering a product or service...

How PR works in a nutshell:

A journalist's job is ONLY to inform, educate or entertain her readers. It is NOT to promote new businesses or services. That's advertising. HOWEVER, if you are able to bring a journalist an idea that their readers (viewers, or listeners) would find INTERESTING, they will consider your story.

Hooks:

A hook is the idea you'll be pitching to a journalist or producer. They are NEVER about you. They are about what you have to offer their reader, viewer or listener. Here. Let me save you hours of reading.

Here are the hooks you should consider:

- A fight or scandal
- An emotional story (tales of transformation, overcoming hardship)
- Sex, drugs or rock n roll
- News – immediate and interesting
- Geographic or cultural proximity
- Topical – something relating to a current news story or problem
- Something that helps their readers (think, save them time, money etc)
- Celebrity
- An amazing stunt
- A big celebration

Media choice:

This is easy.

First, where does your target customer go?

Second, where would you like to be seen?

Answer these and you have your selection.

How not to pitch:

Don't...

- Not bother to read their columns or publication.
- Be impolite or aggressive.
- Speak to them about what you want without telling them why their audience should care.
- Assume they know everything about your category/product and what you do.
- Hassle or threaten to go somewhere else if they say no.

How to pitch:

An easy way to start is by sending your target journalist or producer a simple email. Here's a template that works effectively:

Dear <name>

I wonder if your readers would be interested in an article on <TOPIC> for your <Section name> section.

Readers might be curious to know <interesting fact/teaser>, amongst other intriguing stories.

If this angle is of interest to you, let me know and I'd be delighted to send some further details.

At this stage I have not contacted any other journalists about this opportunity.

Yours sincerely etc.

If they don't reply after a day or two, you can follow up politely with...

Dear <name>

Just resending this in case you missed it.

No response after that? Leave them alone. They're not interested.

Finding your media contacts details:

A good way is simply to call the switchboard of the relevant organisation and ask for the details of the producer.

You can also use LinkedIn to find journalists easily. Send them an in-mail with your pitch.

Media releases:

Sometimes you might want to send a media release because you have a story you think everyone will want.

You can find some easy press release formats and examples on Google, and a good way of distributing them is to use a press release distribution service.

Remember – the headline is the most important part of the Media Release. Also, don't use flowery language – lay the facts out bare for the journalist.