Pitch Better: How to Get Attention from the Media

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Introductions  |  Us
Introductions  |  You

How comfortable are you with pitching?

What areas do you need help with?

What aspect of the media is a mystery to you?
Goal of this session

Increase your comfort level and effectiveness in sharing the great work your museum does!
Timeline of session

• Part I: Pitching Tips (20 min)
• Part II: Talk/workshop at tables (30 min)
• Part III: Report back, conversation, & questions (30 min)

Questions/comments accepted at any time!
Part I: Pitching Tips
Why are you pitching?

Common answers:
• 1,000\textsuperscript{th} visitor—that’s a big deal for us!
• It’d be great to see the museum on TV
• We need to increase visitorship
• My board member told me to “do more press”
• If we’re in the \textit{Globe}, we’ll get more donors
• We do great stuff, but no one knows about it
• Other museums get great press, we should, too
Great for you, not great for reporters
What reporters want

A story!

• Characters
• Drama
• Intrigue
• Conflict
• Injustice
• Underdogs
• Surprise
• Discovery
• Redemption
What an arts reporter is thinking

Why should the average person care?

Who’s the lead character?

Does it raise a question?

How does it connect to what’s going on today?

What is the object’s journey?
What does “storytelling” mean?

When you talk about your work with your spouse or friends, what to do you tell them?

When you meet someone at a party, how do you describe what you do?

What do you talk about in the break room?

What happens at work that you look forward to, what are the moments of drama and comedy?
What content or story should I pitch?

• Announcements (funding, new exhibition, event)
• Profiles
• Expert weigh in
• Trends
• Object lesson
• Technology
• Discovery
• A GOOD STORY
Who should I pitch to?

• Who is your target audience?
• What kind of content do you have? (ex. Long form, breaking news, press release, audio/visual)
• Which reporter is the right fit? (look for expertise, recent bylines, LinkedIn profile)

→ Once you have a person to pitch to, start building a relationship!
How should I pitch?

- Pitch vs. Press Release
- Media kits
- Phone
- Using a PR company
- Social media
- Email
When is the best time to pitch?

• Ask yourself—why now?
• Give advance notice
• Targeting multiple publications at once
• What’s an embargo?
To: Targeted reporter
CC: Other parties that can provide context/answer questions
Subject: Short & sweet, museum name, teaser, time hook
Body: 3 paragraphs, 2-3 sentences each. Use bullet points!
Tone: Have personality, but don’t make it personal.
Getting published...why you won’t

- Buzzwords
- Boring
- No news hook
- Doesn’t align with publication or reporter
- Self-serving
- Unclear
- No call to action
- Too long
- No contact information
Getting published...why you will

- Catchy subject line
- Factual
- Relevant— you know why the audience wants to read your news
- Be concise and clear—don’t brain dump
- You make the reporter’s job easy!
- You have a hard-hitting takeaway
- You started a conversation
Congratulations—you made the news!

Now what?

• Send to your network, and ask them to share it via social media
• Add to your website under “press”
• Share via your museum e-newsletter
• Be prepared for other outlets to pick up your story
• Continue building a relationship with your reporters
Part II: Sharing your Pitches

Cambridge Historical Society example

Brooklyn Historical Society example
Part III: Reporting Back

• What worked for you/didn’t work?
• Share how you changed your pitch based on feedback
• Any lingering questions?
Thanks, everyone!

If you have follow up questions, feel free to get in touch.

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