

Understanding Audience

Think about who you are trying to reach and what messages will appeal to them, and which publications/sites appeal to your target audience

How should I pitch my story to a reporter?

Whether for a news release or media pitch, be able to summarize your story in one sentence:

Who, What, Where, When, How

Do your research on which reporters cover your subject - for example, the best person to pitch to might not be sports reporters, depending on your topic. Look at other stories they have written to gain an understanding of who may be best to approach.

To contact reporters, start by using any personal contacts you may have.

How do I reach out to a reporter?

For a “cold call” pitch, start with an email. Use a punchy subject line to get the reporter’s attention - they get a lot of emails so yours needs to stand out!

Personalize your email as much as possible - for example, refer to another story they have written on a similar subject.

Make the reporter’s life as easy as possible. Be sure to include your contact information in your email. Include photos if relevant.

Check, double-check and triple-check your email and any attachments for correct spelling. Journalists hate typos!

Follow up your email with a phone call. If you get a call back from a journalist, call them back as soon as you can - they are on deadline!

How can my story/CTA stand out?

Think about the timely relevance of your story and build that into your message. For example, tennis is one of the first sports to start back up during the COVID-19 pandemic, since it is easier to use social distancing than in many other sports.

Remember – reporters like establishing relationships with people who make their jobs easy. The more information you have prepared for them, the more likely they are to pursue your story. Putting them in touch with any key stakeholders will simplify their job.

Pitch fun, creative stories! Reporters look for unique angles to promote.

Identify a list of experts that will be willing to speak on a variety of subjects. If a reporter is writing a story on children's health, networking for young adults, etc., it is helpful for them to have a list handy to reach out to your CTA for comment. This gets your CTA's name out there and strengthens your relationship with the reporter.