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How to Pitch Your Product to the Media

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Margie Zable Fisher
WomenEntrepreneur.com

How to Pitch Your Product to the Media

You have a great product and you're sure the media would love a chance to write about it, but you don't know what to do first. Here are the three steps you must take in order to succeed.

Step 1. Have a Product the Media Agree is Great

If you make or sell a product, of course you think it's great. But the media probably use different criteria than you do. Here's what makes a product newsworthy to journalists:

- A truly new product (launched in the past few months or about to be launched)
- Unique, breakthrough product
- Works well, tastes great, etc.
- Colorful packaging/visually appealing
- Product ties into trends--organic/green, political, etc.
- Priced right--less than key price points (\$100, \$50, \$25, \$10) or priced high if truly a luxury item

Step 2: Find the Right Media Contact and Make a Great Pitch

The easiest way to find the appropriate contact is to pick up a newspaper or magazine, check a website or blog, or scrutinize the TV credits. Find out who's in charge of whatever section fits your type of product (e.g., beauty editor, fashion editor).

Call the main number and confirm that individual's e-mail address and direct telephone number.

If you aren't sure whom to contact, call the main number at the media outlet (look it up on the website) and ask for the correct contact. Then get that person's contact information.

To save time, I also recommend a great database of media contacts for retailers and product companies: the Gift List. For a free trial, [click here](#).

Anatomy of a Great Pitch

A pitch is different than a press release because it's customized. Naturally, most media members prefer to receive a pitch that's designed specifically for them. Many PR folks believe you should make a phone pitch first, but I think it's OK to start with an e-mail pitch. In fact, many editors and reporters prefer them.

A great pitch contains the following:

- A personalized greeting ("Hi, Jane" instead of "To Whom It May Concern" or nothing at all)
- Several story angle tie-ins (e.g., new product, hot trend, tie-in to current events, celebrity)
- A description of where your story or product could fit in the media outlet (such as a holiday gift guide or new product section)
- Details about the product (price, colors)
- Call to action (ask if the media person would like a sample, set up a time to get feedback, etc.)

As you ready your pitch for the media, keep these points in mind:

- Preparing your pitch is the hardest part; execution is the easiest.
- Never send a pitch as an e-mail attachment. Cut and paste your information into the body of the message.
- Don't send attachments of photographs or artwork unless requested. Instead, send a link to a photo of your product on your website.

Step 3: Follow Up

This is the part that trips up most do-it-yourself publicists and even PR folks. Once the media have expressed interest in your product or service, be persistent.

The easiest way to follow up is to provide a date and time when you will check back. Get the journalist's agreement, and then do it. For instance:

- Can I call you at 10 a.m. next Monday to see if you'd like to receive a sample?
- Can I call you next Friday at 2 p.m. to get your thoughts on the sample and when you might be able to include it in the What's New section?

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Continue to follow up until you find out the publication or broadcast date.

If you're persistent enough to land a publication date, remember these no-nos when it runs:

- Don't ask for a copy of the piece; that's your responsibility.
- And don't forget to send a thank-you note. I can't emphasize this enough--it will make you stand out from the 99 percent of people who don't send a thank-you note. And it will help create a relationship with the reporter for ongoing publicity opportunities.

Follow these steps and get your great product some great publicity. Plus, your sales will be great, too.