

Communications Resources: Media Relations Best Practices

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Media Relations Best Practices

Securing positive coverage in traditional media remains one of the most coveted ways to elevate your brand. And for good reason, as it acts as a third-party endorsement of your facility, values, and commitment to excellent care. However, building relationships with media to secure that article is not always easy.

Following are best practices and tips designed to help guide your process for effectively pitching and earning media coverage in your local market/s.

Focus on Relationship Building

Reporters value trusted sources who understand their needs and obligations related to their profession as journalists. They look to community leaders, like you, to contribute to their job with an ongoing rapport, not one-off asks or demands. **The more you build relationships with reporters, the higher the likelihood of garnering earned media coverage in stories.**

Craft Highly Relevant Pitches

The number one reason why journalists don't respond to pitches (or worse yet, block those who email them) is that they're irrelevant or too self-promotional. **Ensure that it is to the right person/beat, has a timely hook that is relevant to your community, and is reflective of interesting news geared toward the reporter's target audience.**

Abbreviate Pitches Whenever Possible

Reporters have less time and bandwidth to do their jobs than ever before. As such, **you have three to four sentences to gain their attention and interest in an email. Short pitches with facts that enable writers to produce short-form content quickly** are also appreciated by journalists (see Media Advisory material as reference).

Provide Data, Multimedia, and Experts

Multimedia, data, and expert sources are all assets that make reporters more apt to respond to you. In order to cut through the noise and the numerous other pitches they receive daily, be concise, offer a unique perspective, and provide as many assets as possible – photos, video, interviews with leaders, press releases, op-ed articles, etc. You've got a building full of experts - from your administrator and director of nursing to your activities director and events coordinator!

Remain Nimble

If you're pitching a story, ensure it has a **timely hook or seizes a current trend** so that it is relevant to the outlet's readers. If you see a trend or issue come up where one of your subject matter experts could weigh in, **be sure to anticipate ad-hoc pitching as well as planned initiatives.**

Follow-Up via Call (as Appropriate)

Email is generally a preferred best practice for contacting reporters. However, **a phone call can be a beneficial and appreciated follow-up for strong story opportunities**, especially for more localized publications. If you have an impactful or timely opportunity, **don't rule out calling reporters to pitch a story to begin with and use the email channel as follow-up.**

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