



## HOW TO PITCH A STORY

Once you have your messaging all worked out, you need to get it out there. To do this, you'll need to call reporters and pitch them--convince them your story is worth covering. Here are some tips and things to remember.

### Tips for Pitching a Story

(Credit & thanks for these materials go to Celia Alario, the staff of the Spin Project, Fenton Communications, Ripple Strategies, and voice coach Vicki Post. All material is 'Copy Left' or 'Creative Commons,' so feel free to share, but please credit these folks!)

### **The Pitch: Fundamentals**

- Don't be intimidated
- Think about (and offer) multiple angles
- Be available to reporters when you send information
- Avoid 'no comment'
- Practice your pitch before calling a reporter
- There is no such thing as 'off the record'
- Thank reporters
- Be mindful of how you offer feedback on a story
- Create a pitch call 'rap'
- Know deadlines & communication preferences & honor them
- Introduce yourself before you pitch the story
- Know the outlets
- Learn how stories are assigned
- Have something in writing before you call
- Always be completely honest

### **Remind Yourself: What is News? Frames/Hooks/Angles**

- New
- Announcement
- Exemplary of a Trend
- Variation on an already newsworthy theme
- **Localize a national story**
- Nationalize a local story
- **Dramatic Human Interest**
- **Visuals**
- **Pulls Heart Strings**
- **Controversy**
- **Fresh angle on an old story**
- **Anniversaries!**
- Calendar hook
- Profiles and Personnel
- Special Event
- Respond & React
- Celebrity
- Unusual or Ironic
- Danger or Threat

### **Dos & Don'ts (from 'Spin Works')**

- Never lie to a reporter



- Respect reporters' professionalism
- Never wing it
- Use layperson language that anybody can understand
- Speak in sound bites
- Return reporters' calls
- Meet reporters' deadlines
- Use words to create an image or paint a picture of your story
- Remember: three is a trend
- 'If it bleeds it leads'
- Visualize your story for TV
- Personalize your story
- Think strategically
- Do not answer reporters' questions, respond to them

### **Remember Why You Pitch!**

- Instant gratification (getting the immediate story placed)
- Building for the longer lead time pieces and features
- Establishing yourself as the gateway to the experts
- Building long-term PERSONAL relationships with reporters