



# The Beginner's Guide to Working with Journalists

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A tip packet for independent  
artists and new entrepreneurs

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# Create at least three solid story angles



Story angles are different ways to present the same story.

Think about what makes you unique – how do you stand out from your competition.

How many different topics can you squeeze out of a product or experience? This will improve your chance for coverage.

A recent example:

Hip-hop artist Benny Holmes began writing lyrics in the 1990s as a result of a Detroit sports rivalry. I encouraged him to use that story to lead all Michigan-based outreach, as there is a local spin that involves an emotional event. For outreach outside Michigan, we created other angles.

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# ALWAYS know the journalist's beat before your outreach



A 'beat' is the topic a reporter covers.

Real estate, entertainment and politics are  
some basic beat examples.

If you pitch journalists a story that falls outside  
their beat, they will not only ignore it, but give  
you an eye roll every time they see an email  
with your name on it.

So, do your research. The time spent  
understanding what publications cover and  
what journalists write about will result in  
respect from the reporter and stronger  
relationships with the media overall.

Don't 'spray and pray' with journos.

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# Research reporters online and create a spreadsheet with contacts and beats



If you're serious about getting press, you need to get organized. A good place to start is Twitter.

Seriously, Twitter.

Journalists favor the app and often put their beat and contact information in their profiles. A secret many don't know is this: Journalists want to be found. They want pitches – good ones, though.

Just search “reporter“ on Twitter and the app will pull everyone who has “reporter“ in their bios. Determine which journalists are most likely to report on your company/organization/product.

Organize this information in your spreadsheet with their names, the beat they cover, the publication they are affiliated with, email address, their pronouns (if available) and their Twitter handle.

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# On a separate tab, track your outreach and responses



Organizing outreach is one of the easiest ways to create a more efficient experience for you and help improve interactions with journalists.

By tracking outreach, you can identify which journalists/publications are interested and worth building a relationship with. For those that have no interest, you can identify those reporters for limited outreach only or take them off your list.

A project-management app may help with organization. Below are examples:

Asana  
Airtable  
Basecamp  
Monday  
Trello

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## Acknowledge where you found their contact information



A simple “I discovered your work on \_“ is a good way to showcase you are familiar with their beat and communicate how you accessed their contact information.

## Keep your intro email to the point



Journalists are trained to be concise, so get to the point quickly. Introduce who you are, how you found their information and immediately get into the pitches.

Keep pitches short - a headline and two sentences accompanying the headline is enough to convey the idea. Include a press release or promotional write-up, images or any other multimedia to utilize if they want to explore your work further.





## Give journalists enough information to write something without an interview



It matters how you package information. Entrepreneurs are more likely to receive press if they include a press release or bio, a tip sheet, high-resolution (larger than 1 MB) images and - for artists - access to your multimedia.

It is easier for journalists to do an interview or quick write-up when they have resources.

## Wait 48 hours before sending a follow-up email



Deadlines always take priority. Give journalists some breathing room to wrap up what they're working on before you follow up.

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