

Media Tips Sheet

Pitching Best Practices

- Use the pitch format. Stay away from press releases unless you have something to announce.
- Make sure your pitch has the 4 components: intro/platform/thoughts/close. Use bullet points to define your thoughts.
- Remember the different types of pitches: current events, myths, predictions, tips and best practices, controversy, etc. The goal is always to position yourself as the expert and thought leader in the field.
- Don't be self-promotional.
- Doublecheck grammar.
- Use simple language (think elementary school). No industry jargon unless pitching to trade media.
- Personalize when possible.
- Include previous TV links when pitching TV.
- When pitching magazines or online, offer to write an article as well as interview.
- Expect plenty of rejection. That's part of the process.

Appearing on TV

- Keep it conversational.
- Always look at the host or person interviewing you unless told otherwise.
- Watch the length of your responses. No yes or no responses but not the Gettysburg Address, either. 15-20 seconds is a good range to go by.
- Don't talk about yourself, your book, company, product, etc., unless the interview is specifically about those things. You're there to serve as an expert on the topic.
- If you don't know the answer to a question, never say, "I don't know." Instead, talk about what you do know related to the topic and redirect the interview. *Note – it is okay to tell a print reporter on the phone that you don't know something and that you will find out and get back to him/her.
- Lose the crutch words when starting your responses: I think, yeah, um, so you know, certainly, absolutely.
- Use the name of the host once or twice to personalize. "When people generally think about money, Bob, they tend to..."
- Don't wear all white, black, red or green. Solids are good. Pastels are good. Small patterns and designs are good. No crazy patterns. Dress for the station and audience. CNBC – shirt, tie and jacket. Local morning TV segment: jacket and shirt or even just a polo. Watch the show ahead of time and see how the guests dress.
- Do a lot of local TV interviews and work your way into national ones. You need the experience and to build your confidence, not to mention a national producer is going to want to see local appearances before booking you. Practice makes perfect.
- TV segments tend to get bumped, rescheduled and even cancelled. Don't take it personally. Breaking news dictates news coverage.

General tips/best practices

- Remember the point of a media campaign is to build credibility.
- The people who grow their businesses or book speeches typically are the ones who leverage the media best.
- Subscribe to HARO <https://www.helpareporter.com/>, a free service where you can pitch reporters for actual stories they are working on.
- Interviews are great but don't forget about writing articles. So many print and online outlets welcome and need this. Best article is the "tips article." Give the reader a takeaway or teach them how to do something based on your tips.
- Write op-eds or opinion articles when there is an issue in the news that you feel strongly about.
- Be careful with follow up calls and always respect the journalist's time. Don't call around deadline and get to the point quickly.
- Media is not something you do for 30 days. You have to keep at it.
- Be careful of any publicist or PR firm that makes big promises. The truth is there are no guarantees, only best efforts.
- You don't go in the media to sell books. You write books to get in the media.
- The key to keeping a media campaign going forever is to keep coming up with new ideas and to keep playing into current events or stories in the news.
- Set Google alerts for keywords in your industry and stay on top of the news.