



Tips When Pitching a News Story

There are easy-to-follow, but essential rules when pitching stories to a reporter. Timing, method, and effectiveness will always determine whether or not your story is picked up. However, it is important to remember that just because you follow the guidelines, your pitch is never guaranteed to result in coverage.

Timing is important when pitching a news story, so remember:

- Most reporters are busy after 3:00 p.m. because they have a filing deadline with their editors. This is especially true with newspaper reporters. Electronic mediums vary in deadline time because they work in shifts and their deadlines vary from short to long term.
- The best way to know when to pitch a story is to ask a reporter once you have made initial contact. They will appreciate that you are interested in when they need information.

The method of pitching a story is important, so know how your reporter prefers to receive pitches and news releases.

- The most common method of pitching a news story is by e-mail. However, there is nothing wrong with calling a reporter and pitching a news story unless you are specifically asked not to call.
- When pitching by e-mail, try to limit the pitch to three or four lines. When pitching by phone, try to pitch in 30 – 45 seconds.
- Typical news pitch: “Hi (reporter), this is (name) from (credit union name), do you have a few minutes?”
- Always pitch to a reporter or an editor, not anyone who answers the phone. Ask the operator for a specific reporter, or ask for the newsdesk/newsroom.

What makes an effective pitch?

- The pitch must be newsworthy, meaning the story you are pitching must be interesting to the entire readership, listenership, or viewership (depending on the medium).
- Try to package the story by providing a visual, statistics, and/or a couple of sources. The more information you can provide the reporter, the better the story, and the easier for them to create.
- Offer exclusivity if you can. Pitching is separate than sending a news release. When pitching a story it is best to offer the story to single reporter, unless they decline the story. Offering exclusivity is a great way to build a relationship as well.

My pitch was turned down, now what?

- Ask the reporter why they turned down the pitch and how you can make it newsworthy. If they don't believe there is a story, move on.
- Offer the pitch to a second reporter to see if they are interested in the story.
- Most important, don't become upset if nobody wants to run the story. It may take several pitches before one of your stories gets picked up.