Top Ten Pitching the Reporter Tips

1. Get Their Attention!
Get to the point, and then work the details. If you are cold calling a reporter with whom you do not have a relationship, or even if you have worked with the reporter before, it is important to get their attention quickly. You should know why the reporter might cover your story. You should be able to quickly and interestingly explain the story or event.

2. Practice Your Pitch
Prepare your story by practicing the pitch on a co-worker to be sure your story and approach is interesting. Write down important details and outline how you plan to pitch the story.

3. Listen First
When you call a reporter; be sure they are not on deadline. If so, the reporter may wish to speak to you at a better time. Inquire as to a better time to call and call back when it works best for the reporter.

4. Be Specific
When you talk to the reporter, be prepared with supporting facts, names, and details. You need to be organized in case the reporter wants to follow up on any stories or facts you present. Be specific in regards to your story.

5. Know the Issue
The reporter you work with may be very knowledgeable on the details surrounding your story. You should have a clear message and story as well as in-depth knowledge on the issues.

6. Relevance
Connect your story with a relevant current event. Maybe there is a related bill in the State Legislature or a new study or something else of relevance.

7. Facts
If you do not know the answer to a reporter’s inquiry, suggest that you call them back when you have the information. Do not make up facts, they may appear on tomorrow’s front page.

8. Additional Materials
Be prepared to offer additional materials such as pictures, background information, and sources, which the reporter may need to complete a story.

9. Keep Record
Record what stories you pitch and to whom. This will provide you with a log of reporter interests and particular requirements that may aid in working with the reporter in the future.

10. Retry, Re-pitch
Do not harass a reporter. However, you should consider different angles which strike different interest if one method is not working. If you come up with a new angle or development, feel free to pitch the story to the reporter again. Don’t be afraid to call again if they forget to follow-up with you.

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