

Follow Up on Your Release

(Without Spamming Everyone)

OVERNIGHTPR

Small businesses are in a tough spot when it comes to promoting their product and their company. They need to get the word out most and can generally afford to pay for marketing expertise the least.

This guide is your free resource on how to maximize your marketing & public relations dollar. It's like a free consultation with a marketing pro. I hope that you find this useful, and if you have any comments or ideas for further guides, or if I can help your organization with its PR & marketing, drop me a line at: tlongino@overnightpr.com.

The best way to get people talking about your organization is to tell them a story about you. We've been telling stories since the first caveman made a fire in his cave, and that's still the most memorable way to communicate with other people.

When I say "story" here, I mean telling your potential customers what it is that makes your business unique. If you make the best pizzas in town, your story should be about the pizza making contests that you've entered and won, and the free pizza you give to Honor Roll students at the local elementary school. Press Releases are one of the most cost efficient ways to tell a story about your business through a variety of different means.

Like dandelion seeds in the wind, the best stories float off far beyond your control and take root in minds you've never met. New customers and opportunities will grow. Read on for some innovative ways you can get new ideas to take root around you.

Handy-Dandy Reference Sheet

(Because who has time to read 7 pages of text anyway?)

Let's Make This Easy:

There's a whole lot of reading here for a quick guide. If you want a handy reference to how to "Follow Up on Your Release (Without Spamming Everyone)," then go no further!

Trevor's 7 Rules of PR Pitching:

- 1. Keep it Clear:** Right off the bat, tell your recipient why you're following up: you want them to write about you. Include the word "Pitch" in your subject line of your email.
- 2. Tell 'em Their Name:** You've done your research on 'em, so let them know in the first word: start with their name.
- 3. Start with Them:** Talk about a recent article of theirs that you've read.
- 4. Bring it Together:** Then move on to your recent release and why you think they'd be interested in it.
- 5. Give Them the Skinny:** Include your headline and the first paragraph of your new release with a link to the rest of it on your site.
- 6. Thank Them for Their Time:** Because you've just interrupted their day, tell them that you appreciate their consideration.
- 7. End with You:** ...and then don't forget to give them a few ways to contact you. Email, phone, and IM, for example.

That's the skinny version of of the seven rules that will help you get more coverage for your story; read on for more indepth information. If you've got any questions, disagree with any of these rules (they're mine, after all; you may have different ones!) or if you think that I've left anything out, let me know at tlongino@overnightpr.com.



**pitch
your story**

Pitch Your Story?

Yep. Reporters are busy and frequently don't look over the mass of untargeted press releases that land in their inbox or on their desk? Well, here's your chance to direct a targeted press release right to the media influencers that you want talking about you. If a press or news release is a tool that you can use to get media attention, then steps 1 - 3 above are three other tools that you'll find quite handy. When you combine all of them, you give yourself enormous leverage to get your story out, and we're about to discuss how to apply that leverage.

There's a good way to pitch a press release to a reporter or blogger and there's a bad way. I could show you an example of the bad way, but learning from negative examples always seems like making fun of someone, so let's focus on the positive instead.

Starting on the next page are "Trevor's 7 Rules of PR Pitching" to a reporter or blogger. I'm going to assume that you're contacting your reporter or blogger through email, although most of this format carries over to phone calls, IM conversations, snail mail letters and even carrier pigeons.

HELLO
my name is

udl
Schmick

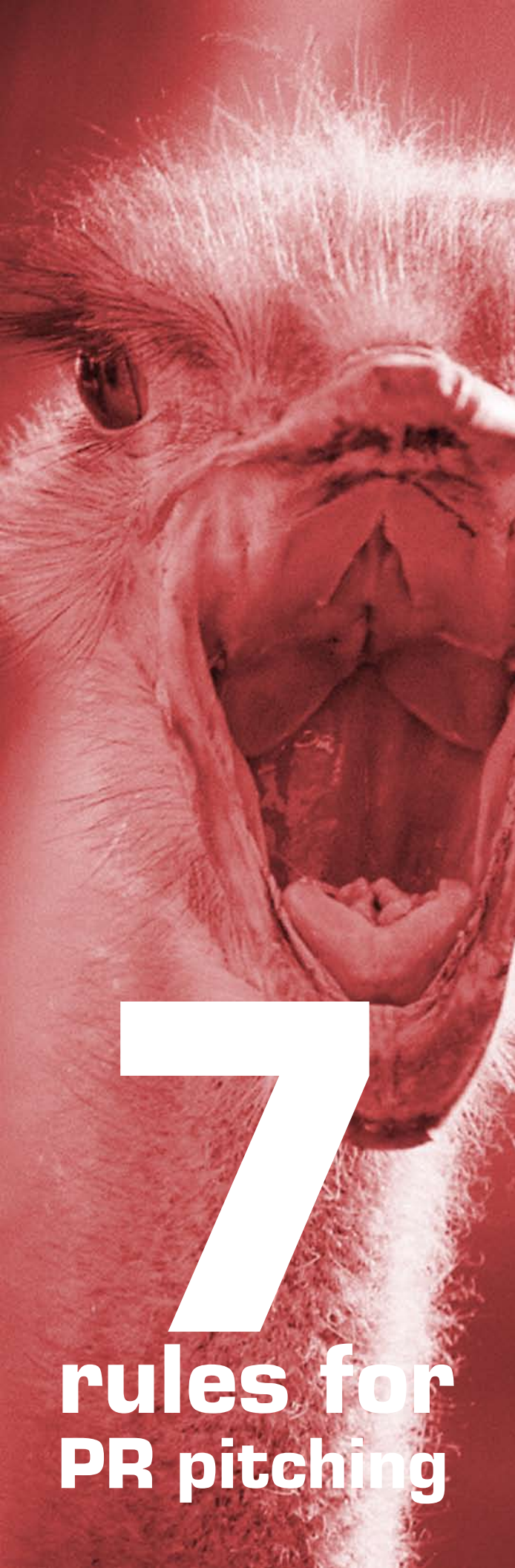
7 rules for PR pitching

1 Keep it Clear:

Your subject line should be clear. You're sending this person a pitch because he or she is involved in the media in some way. Don't be coy. If they don't want a pitch, the last thing that they need is to have you trying to hide the fact that you're pitching them. I always include a subject line like, "PR Pitch in response to [[Story or subject the reporter or blogger has written]]." That way, if they don't want to read pitches, they know that they don't want to read that email. If you include the title of a news story or blog post that person has written in the subject line, the odds that you will pique their interest are pretty good.

2 Tell 'em Their Name:

Start your email with [[reporter or editor's name]]. In another life, at another company that I run, I write a lot of email newsletters for small businesses. As such, I know that 80% of people who have business emails (and email clients like Thunderbird, Outlook, or Yahoo! Mail) read their emails in the "preview pane" of their email, and if they see their name when they look at it in the preview pane, they are much more likely to open and read the entire email.



7 rules for PR pitching

3 Start with Them:

The intro paragraph should talk about an article that editor has written recently that makes you think that they would be interested in running a story about your business or organization. This is where you'll find that earlier research pays off. If you've done your research properly, you should be able to remember an article that they wrote recently that talks about something similar to your story. Mention their article in your intro paragraph. That makes you stand out from all of the untargeted pitches that they get every day and will make them take notice.

4 Bring it Together:

Write a brief sentence or two discussing why your business or organization relates to the article that they've written, but is different enough that it's news. Again, research in your area beforehand pays off big here. If everyone's beaten a hot topic to death, they'll be looking to goose the topic one last time before letting it peter out. Providing a different slant on the dying topic can get you coverage. If the news topic is just now booming and everyone's scrambling to figure out what it's about, a release that helps clarify understanding and gives bloggers and reporters juicy pull quotes will get you noticed. Either way, you need to be just different enough from what's happening to get noticed without being so different that no one knows what the heck you're doing. It's a fine line to walk, so watch your step!



7 rules for PR pitching

5 Give Them the Skinny:

Include the headline and first paragraph of your press release. Include a link to the rest of it. If they're interested, they'll click through and read more. If they're not, it's not going to get read anyway, so why include the whole thing? Your goal is to make the entire email look like something that the reporter or blogger can skim through in three minutes. Even on a busy day, can't you take three minutes to learn something interesting and useful for your job? They can, too.

6 Thank Them for Their Time:

They're busy. And even if they're not busy at that exact moment, it's still polite to thank them for reading your pitch and considering if there's a reason why they might want to talk about you in their publication.

7 End with You:

If you're concerned with writing the perfect pitch (in the key of "news" of course), you may get so worked up that you forget to include contact information. Now, the journalist can indeed email you back for contact info, but every extra step you add to the process means that you've got that many journalists who won't bother anymore. That's tragic, and no one wants that. So include your full name, a link to your website (and possibly a separate link to your online press room or photo album if applicable), your email address, phone number, skype name (if you've got one), and IM or any other method that you use to communicate. And then make sure that you check them regularly over the next few days.

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