

# 5 tips for getting media to 'swipe right' on your press release

[Media](#)



In many ways the rules of dating and interacting with the media aren't all that different. When searching for love, or trying to get a journalist to pick up your story, the best plan of action is to be honest and polite at all times and follow a clear set of age old etiquette rules.

The key to success in both activities lies in developing real relationships. Journalists want to build long term mutually beneficial connections with companies who can provide them with a steady flow of interesting, newsworthy announcements and who are responsive to questions and requests. Wow them on their first date and they might just give you another shot in the future too.

But don't overstep the mark, or behave in a rude, dismissive or entitled manner as there are " plenty of fish in the sea" lined up behind you waiting for their chance to shine. So what media tips can we learn from dating?

## **1. Make a good first impression.**

In the same way as a button up shirt will make a better impression on a first date than a faded 1998 Metallica Tour T-shirt, it is important to show the journalists the best version of your company possible in one glance.

Journalists can only afford to spend a short time reviewing each pitch. You may only have about 10 seconds of the journalist's time to convince them you are worth their effort so be sure to follow a clear structure, keep your pitch email concise and give them all the essential they need within the first two paragraphs.

A good way to start on the right foot with busy journalists is by attaching a beautifully designed and informative , which gives them all the information they could need or want about your company, along with links to your website, LinkedIn and social media pages.

Before pitching your story to the media, you should make sure your company design is on point, as your website is the window into your company's values and big mission. Dress to impress, and people will give your content the time of day, but offer something which looks like it was designed in high school computing class and they are unlikely to have much faith in your capabilities.

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## **2. Make them feel special.**

Getting someone's name wrong, or confusing some part of their story with someone else is a dating faux pas. No one wants to go out with a serial dater who meets so many people that they all become a blur.

The same goes for journalists. When reaching out to the media, it is important to take the time to search for contacts who write about your field or industry. Just as Tinder has revolutionized matchmaking, leveling the playing field for even the most bashful would-be Romeos, tools like , and are making it easier to find journalists who cover your " beat," based on their previous work and social media behavior.

Once you have compiled a list of suitable journalists, the best plan to to create an outreach document so you can keep track of your progress and timeline. Rather than spamming large groups of journalists, you should take

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the time to craft each pitch email individually, making sure to use their correct name, and include a short explanation as to why your story would be a good fit for them. Journalists love "breaking news" so to improve your chances of success you should offer exclusivity, and give them a clear time limit to respond before you pitch the story to the next person on your list.

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### **3. Don't talk too much or tell tall tales.**

Whether it be due to nerves, or just one too many glasses of wine for dutch courage, not letting your partner get a word in, or telling fibs can be a fatal flaw on a first date.

So keep your pitch email short and sweet and include all of the necessary information about your service or product without leaning too heavily on superlatives or overly dramatic descriptions. Try to keep your pitch under 200 words, or half a page of text. You don't need to share every small detail of your life story, the aim of your first date is to "hook" the interest of your reader.

Also, while your aim is to impress, you shouldn't try to pull the wool over their eyes or exaggerate your own importance.

If a journalist decides to cover your story, they will inevitably do extensive background research before putting their name -- and reputation -- on your announcement. In the same way as you will probably get caught out if you claim to be a brain surgeon when you actually work in sales, any falsehoods

in your pitch will eventually come to light, and you will be unlikely to ever hear from that journalist again.

#### **4. Don't stand them up.**

There is no better way to tick off a potential partner than leaving them nursing a glass of wine alone at a table with their face burning with embarrassment, only for you to arrive an hour late or not at all.

When reaching out to the media, you should always be respectful of the journalist's time.

If the journalist responds to your email, requests further information or asks to clarify any points, be sure to get back to them in a timely manner, and make any edits or changes to the content which they suggest. Journalists deal with CEOs and leading professionals on a daily basis, so don't expect them to bend over backwards to cater to your schedule.

If they request a phone call to get quotes or extra information, you should try to be as accommodating as possible, and be sure to be available at that time. If you miss their call the chances are you will not get another one. If for whatever reason you simply cannot take the call, pass them onto someone worthy of their time like a co-founder or product manager.

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#### **5. If things don't work out, take no for an answer.**

Whether you're on a date or speaking to a journalist, no means no.

Journalists are bombarded with hundreds of pitches each week from companies who are convinced that theirs is the most important news ever. Always remember that a journalist's responsibility is to their publication and readership, and that they don't owe coverage to anyone. If a journalist doesn't respond to your initial contact, it is fine to follow up with a second email -- as long as you state that you will do so initially. But if you still don't hear anything, then walk away with your head held high and your self-respect intact and contact the next person on your list.

In dating and media relations alike, small gestures can go a long way. If a journalist takes the time to respond to your email, be sure to reply with a polite message thanking them for their time and consideration, even if they have decided against covering your story. It will improve your chances of coverage in the future.

Journalists and editors are the gatekeepers who decide whether your announcement will make it as far as their wider readership. Like with dating, it is important to make sure your first impression is as good as possible; you want to survive the first 'date' and have the chance of a continued relationship. If things are going smoothly, and a journalist is responsive to your emails and covers stories which they feel are relevant to their publication, then keep them sweet by offering a steady flow of newsworthy announcements, and don't hold back from sending them "gifts" by retweeting their stories and thanking them publicly on social media for publishing your content.