



Pitch Letters

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What is a pitch letter?

- A **brief introduction** to a subject you intend to cover in more detail in press releases, backgrounders, or other publicity pieces. It is usually intended for a **media audience** (reporters and editors) and not the general public.
- Interest the reporter into writing a story about your event or product, at which point you will provide more information.

Differences from a Press Release or a Media Advisory

- Goes straight to **reporter**.
- Less information
- Never seen by public, unlike some press releases
- Less formal
- Personalized
- Based heavily on **relationships**

Format

1. Email Headline

- Although not strictly necessary, a **punchy headline** can add an element of interest to your pitch letter, so if you're going to have one make sure it's good.

2. First Paragraph

- Lead; have a **hook** that makes your product or service specifically **important** to your **reporter** and their **audience**
- **Get right to the point:** summarize why the publications audience would be interested in what you're pitching

Format

3. Second Paragraph

- 5 W's: who, what, when, where, why, how
- **Brief** information

4. Third Paragraph

- Offer **sample of product** or access to event, etc.

5. Final Paragraph

- **Call to action**
- Contact you for more information

Tips

- **Keep it short and get to the point quickly**
- **Know your audience:** different letter to each reporter with a new twist
- **Know your medium:** read the publication, become familiar with the types of stories it normally covers and format your pitch letter to address the needs of the audience
- **Target precisely:** sent straight to reporter
- **Offer a newsworthy topic:** if it's not inherently newsworthy, make it newsworthy to the reporter and their audience
- **Don't send attachments**

Tips

- **Get to know the players:** figure out which journalists in the area cover stories related to your company
- **Get on their radar:** add them on social media, like their stuff so that they become familiar with your name
- **Don't overlook blogs or online publications:** most people get their information from social media (Pew Research Center)

Tips

- The best pitch letters tell an interesting story and solve a reader's problem
 - "Solving someone's problem is the #1 tip for pitches. Good articles inform and entertain. The best also solve readers' problems—typically by way of tangible examples showing how, say, a company navigated a partnership with a larger firm, or finagled creative financing in a tight credit market, or turbocharged its growth by building a strong management team."

-- *Former Forbes Editor Brett Nelson*

Things to Avoid

- Exclamation marks
- Flowery adjectives with no real meaning
- Clichés
- Unprovable bragging
- Information that is not purely facts
- Caps, bold, Underline
- “Exclusive” unless you’re truly only offering the story to that person.
- Click bait



Example

Hi John,

I'll get straight to the point. We met at the local Chamber of Commerce breakfast last month. Your recent pieces about local business and social media have inspired me to generate my own social media success story.

Our company, Fab Clothes for Kids, has just created a super popular Facebook group offer. We've already had over 500 entrants, and it's only just begun. Not only are we offering great discounts, but we are supporting our local community by donating to the local food bank.

I'd love to give you advanced access to our press release. We'll be channeling this out on Friday. Attached is an exclusive pre-release copy.

Great to chat further with you, let me know your interest.

Regards,
Sandy

Sandy Smith
Owner, Fab Clothes for Kids
[@sandysmith](https://twitter.com/sandysmith)
sandy@fab.com
555-555-5555

Just do it, don't
waste space
saying it

Highlights Connection

I'll get straight to the point. We met at the local Chamber of Commerce breakfast last month. Your recent pieces about local business and social media have inspired me to generate my own social media success story.

Compliment the
reporter

Tie in to pitch

Mentions name of company here instead of in the lead

Superfluous; let your numbers speak for themselves

Our company, Fab Clothes for Kids, has just created a super popular Facebook group offer. We've already had over 500 entrants, and it's only just begun. Not only are we offering great discounts, but we are supporting our local community by donating to the local food bank.

Newsworthy

Local interest

Call to action

Not a typical thing
to offer

I'd love to give you advanced access to our press release. We'll be channeling this out on Friday.
Attached is an exclusive pre-release copy.

Great to chat further with you, let me know your interest.

Timeline
Information

Makes an offer

- No attachments
- Don't say exclusive unless it truly is exclusive

Relevance to Public Relations Professionals

- It is hard to get **noticed** in a world dominated by massive amounts of information all the time. Pitch letters are **short, relevant**, and more likely to **engage reporters** into writing your story than just sending a cold press release.
- Offer different options to clients
- Marketable skill

Relevance to a Client

- Know what to ask for
- Media training
- Know when your PR professional has written you a good pitch letter

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