

4 Ways to Build Strong Relationships with Journalists

SMART START

Learn how to build and strengthen relationships
with journalists and the media.

Thank you for downloading the **4 Ways to Build Strong Relationships with Journalists** Smart Start.

In this guide, you'll learn how to connect with journalists more effectively to build authentic, long-lasting, and mutually beneficial relationships.



What Is Earned Media?

Securing earned media mentions is the ultimate outcome of developing and nurturing relationships with journalists.

If you're unfamiliar, think of earned media as digital word-of-mouth marketing that comes in the form of features, interviews, mentions, reposts and more.

Benefits of earned media include:

- **Awareness** - Earned media mentions provide companies the ability to build relevant backlinks that can boost SEO performance and position the brand as an expert in their industry.
- **Targeting** - Crafting compelling press releases that speak directly to a community is an impactful way to build a digital presence. Targeting relevant media placements empowers companies to niche down and speak directly to their target audiences.
- **Reputation** - Connecting and building relationships with your target audience through consistent press release distribution and earned media mentions will create and solidify a positive reputation.

At Newswire, a goal of our **Press Release Optimizer (PRO)** is turning our clients' owned media into earned media.

Through our PRO, we combine our robust SaaS platform and the expertise of our Media and Marketing team to help small and midsize companies generate the results needed to stand out from the competition and secure their piece of market share

Brand awareness, website traffic, improved search engine optimization (SEO) rankings, and increased sales are some of the positive outcomes PRO clients achieve.

In fact, our clients have landed features in top-tier publications such as *Bloomberg*, *Business Insider*, *Cheddar*, *CNET*, *Forbes*, *People*, *TechCrunch*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Yahoo!* and more.

But achieving these results requires a brand to identify who they need to connect with to start the conversation and build mutually beneficial relationships.

Before we dig into the main topic of this resource, let's gain a better understanding of why.

Why Should Brands Develop Relationships With Journalists?

The first, most important step to earning coverage in relevant media publications starts with the relationships you build with journalists.

Think of journalists as bouncers at a nightclub. Imagine you're waiting in a line that wraps around the building.



When you finally reach the front, the bouncer closes off the red velvet rope and shuts the door. You're left feeling frustrated because you put in the time and effort only to be turned away.

That's what it's like for companies who distribute newsworthy press releases but can't secure media mentions that build brand awareness and help them stand out from the competition.

Now, imagine the same scenario but when you reach the front of the line, the bouncer recognizes you, trusts you and, as a result, lets you in.

The sense of familiarity and confidence you've established with the bouncer helped create this opportunity.

The same notion applies to the relationships you build with journalists as they control what stories they pursue and which ones they don't.

How to Build Strong Relationships with Journalists

Dave Gulliver, a Content Strategist at Newswire, has more than 20 years of experience as a reporter. In that time, he's worked with hundreds of PR and communications professionals.

When asked about the ones he remembers best, his answer was simple,

"The ones I spoke with least."



The best people Dave worked with were the ones who pitched newsworthy stories, did their homework on his past pieces to understand the type of stories he wrote and gave him what he needed when he needed it.

So, how can you create and nurture these types of relationships with journalists?



Respect Their Time

It's reported that journalists receive between **50 and 500 pitches per week**.

Can you imagine sifting through those emails and direct messages?

It's a daunting and overwhelming task; understanding the volume of messages a journalist receives in a week can provide an empathetic perspective to help influence your approach.

That said, make sure the person you're contacting is the right one. Journalists move around from covering different beats to working for various publications. Double-check your contact information before hitting *Send*.

Pitching the wrong contact can make you look uninformed and tarnish the journalist's perception of you and your brand, which hurts your chances of future features.

Do you remember the *Can you hear me now?* commercials?

The spokesman would pop up in different locations and ask that same question repeatedly. While effective for those advertising campaigns, sending too many follow-up emails to a journalist can hurt your relationship.

When you send a pitch, give the journalist at least 48 hours to a week to review the pitch, and if you want to follow up, we suggest doing so first thing in the morning before the craziness of their day ensues.

Be Direct

Keep your pitches short and sweet. As mentioned before, journalists are inundated with messages. They don't want to leaf through a chapter book to uncover what you're trying to pitch.

Start with a clear, direct, and compelling subject line, and in the body of the email, get your point across in three or four sentences.

Remember, your message is one of the dozens of pitches and press releases journalists receive in a day.

Do your homework and read through the journalist's past articles, understand who makes up their target audience and craft your pitch accordingly.

We covered the topic of media pitching in-depth. Learn More in our Media Pitching 101 Smart Start.

[DOWNLOAD](#)



Be Relevant

Building on the latter point, when pitching news about a client, make sure it's relevant to the journalist's beat. Don't stop there. Find a common thread that ties your pitch and some of their previous pieces together.

Sometimes, journalists need you to connect the dots for them.

Cover the following:

- **What** - What's your news?
- **Why** - Why is it relevant to the journalist and their audience?
- **How** - How does your news provide value to the end user?

The answers to these questions should help you spell out the value you bring to the table for the journalist.

Be Useful

Journalists need precisely two things: Good story ideas and expert sources for stories.

Always give one or both and make it clear that you're available if they need you for other stories.

And when a journalist expresses interest in your story ... DELIVER.

Put in the work and provide them with what they need, when they need it.

Creating a good experience from start to finish will improve the likelihood of the journalist remembering you the next time you reach out with a story.



Get help with your press release distribution today!

Not sure what you need from a distribution partner or where to start? Newswire's team of expert PR Strategists can conduct a free, comprehensive needs analysis to determine the right solution. In addition to press release distribution options, Newswire offers additional media and marketing communications support through the Press Release Optimizer

Let's Get Started
Press Release Optimizer

