

14 Tips on Creating the Perfect Media Pitch

Here's how to get your story picked up.

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Tips from the Trenches features practice management issues, and is written exclusively for PM by members of the Institute for Podiatric Excellence and Development (IPED). IPED's mission is to motivate, inspire, and synergistically bridge the gap between students, residents, new practitioners, and seasoned veterans in the field of podiatric medicine. They are committed to the idea that mentors with passion to share and mentees eager to learn make a powerful combination that allows IPED to bring and renew a full life to podiatric physicians, their practices, and their well-being throughout the U.S. and beyond. Visit www.podiatricexcellence.org.

Attracting the media is an art form. Few of us went to medical school and learned how to pitch the media. Here are fourteen ideas that have been shown to be effective in getting the attention of the media. These suggestions were recommended by pro-



ducers and media experts and have worked for others and can work for you and your doctors.

1. Headlines

Nothing is as important as a compelling headline that tells what it is you want to discuss or have written or what you have to offer. Think of your headline as a billboard on the freeway. You have literally 2-4 seconds to attract the attention of a driver or a reader of your pitch. Remember, the producer or news

broadcaster may receive hundreds of E-mails a day. If the headline isn't compelling or interesting, can you say "delete"? The headline or the hook is usually placed on the subject line.

2. Bullet Points.

Producers are excellent at scanning your email. They aren't speed readers. If you can put your pitch into a few bullet points, you will likely get your pitch read. This is far better than lengthy verbiage.

3. Large Fonts

USA Today and newspapers use large fonts. Look at

examples in the newspaper and the hook is in the title and it is always in large fonts. Don't make producers or readers of your pitch strain to read your message.

4. Mention Your "Take Away".

Always ask "does the pitch clearly mention 'what does the audience take away from that segment or story?'" If not, you are unlikely to get booked or have an interview with a writer. Examples of takeaways include: Cre-

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ate a short foot book for everyone in the audience which is quite simple to do and useful in many ways. Or the first 20 callers get a free copy of your book. Or listeners will know the five reasons that they need to prevent foot problems and care for their feet.

5. Tie-Ins

How does your appearance or story tie in with something big? For example November is national diabetes awareness month and will explain the importance of annual screening, especially for those with diabetes. Discuss preventative foot care for diabetics and proper footwear.

With a little creativity you can tie in your topic with almost any program or media outlet. For example, contact a radio talk show that was focused on sports and children. The pitch can be, “Three Tips for Preventing Foot and Ankle Injuries”.

6. Hot Topics

What is sizzling hot at the moment? If a national celebrity or politi-

cian has come forward with a disease or condition and you are an expert on this topic, the media is going to find you attractive to give a local angle to the national topic. Usually anything that scares people about their health is going to be a hot topic.

7. Don't E-mail Blast.

You won't get very far if you start out with “hi” or “dear producer”. Customize your pitch for each media outlet. Find out the name of the decision maker, which is usually the producer or the program director and use the person's first name in the pitch. Be absolutely certain to spell it correctly. There's no faster way to be placed in the trash folder than to misspell the intended reader's name.

You want to mention their media

8. Provide Your Opinions.

The producer and the host need

to know your opinions, which need to be placed in the pitch. Put it in and make it quotable so the producer or writer can use it for their lead in. For example, when the topic is platelet-rich protein injections used for national athletes, your opinion can be rendered for its use with pros and cons.

9. Be Persistent, Not Pesky.

Polite persistence pays. That means having a meticulous system for following up with the media without being a boring intrusion. The experts suggest that you need

a sixth sense to gage each media person and identify their comfort zone for their follow-up. If they say “no”, it usually means no, and you need to place that option in the no column and move on.

10. Emphasize Your Expert Angle.

At the beginning of your pitch, highlight your credentials as an expert. Usually, just mentioning that you are a doctor is enough to capture their attention. But don't be shy about embellishing your credentials such as “A doctor with 40 years of practice and provided podiatric care for thousands of patients.”

11. Use Numbered Lists.

For example, you might mention that you can cover the five most

common foot conditions that significantly affect quality of life.

12. Be a One Screener.

Make every effort to make your pitch fit onto one screen. Don't make readers scroll down as they will likely get scroll fatigue and go to their next

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E-mail. Remember: shorter is sweeter!

13. Attachments Are a No-No.

Few readers will open your attachments. If you can't hook them on the first screen with a catchy title, then an attachment or two will not make you more attractive.

14. Don't Use Facsimiles

Finally, don't use faxes. It's 2018 and faxes have gone the way of the *Yellow Pages*. Faxes get lost and producers don't look at them.

Bottom Line: Pitching to the medium is an art style. You can learn how to attract media attention using the proper pitch. Following a few steps as shown above can result in an interview on a radio talk show, a TV program, or having an article written about you and your practice. **PM**



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