

# How to increase your media relations success

Media relations can be exciting yet, at the same time, intimidating. The fact remains that media relations are critical to an effective public relations plan, so it's important to develop a strong understanding of the media and how best to communicate with them. Once you develop the basic – yet key – fundamentals, you will improve message adoption, which in turn will generate better results.

This list of tactics will help improve your communication tactics in dealing with the media, and effectively and efficiently increase media exposure for your firm.

**Do your homework.** Get to know the reporters and the publications you need to reach by researching and building a targeted list of the publications and journalists relevant to your practice area or areas. Once you identify journalists who cover your specific practice areas or areas, find out what he/she has recently written to understand the subtleties of their coverage area.

**Develop a great pitch.** Pull together as much information as possible to create targeted pitches and story ideas that are both compelling and relevant. If possible, dig up statistics and trends to support every angle.

**Make the reporter's job as easy as possible.** When sending ideas via email, always put the most important news in the first paragraph. You should also include the company's URL or links to bios on attorneys, as a reporter will often visit the company's website before calling back.

**Craft a catchy subject line.** This is important since editors and reporters get hundreds of emails a day, so you have to entice them into opening your email. However, avoid using all caps or excessive punctuation, as both of those tactics produce a red flag that your pitch might be a virus. Finally, never send out a group email with your entire distribution list in the header. It's impersonal and shows a lack of effort on your part – and people won't appreciate either having their email addresses revealed to everyone in your list or being made to feel unimportant as individuals.

**Be careful what you send via email.** Never send unsolicited email attachments, as some reporters will be wary of opening them due to virus concerns, and others simply won't take the time.

**Follow up your email pitch with a phone call.** A phone call will get you better results and allow you to build the relationships you need to ensure consistent success. Plus, it's much easier for a reporter to delete an email or send a quick "no" than it is to hang up on you. Most reporters are extremely busy and will give you only 30 seconds to make your case, so use this time wisely to offer a convincing argument of why a given reporter should care



**Carlos Arcos**  
Senior Vice President  
Public Relations  
713.826.5195  
carcos@jaffepr.com

about your pitch.

**Tip:** Leave only one voice message, and then continue to call the reporter at different times of the day (non-deadline times, of course) until you catch them live, but don't go overboard and become a pest with excessive calling.

**Build a relationship with reporters.** When you get a reporter on the phone, always ask what he or she is working on and how you can help. This will help you uncover new opportunities that will allow you to position your news by way of a different point of view. Be sure to provide assistance even if it won't necessarily benefit your law firm at that moment. Eventually, the reporter will come to you with new story opportunities – rather than the other way around.

**Follow up aggressively!** This is the hardest part of media relations but the most important tactic. It is important to be in front of reporters on a consistent basis with compelling information that demonstrates what you are pitching is viable, credible and worthy of coverage.

**Working with the media** is not always easy, but, armed with the right tools and some practice such as these simple tactics, you can increase coverage of your law firm.