



News Rules

Working with media means knowing the rules

Managing your relationship with media is important – the press is your access to the general public, after all, so you want them to see you as professional and aware.

Having a good working relationship requires understanding how a news operation works. Your approach, timing and form tell them a lot about how much you understand what they do.

Here are some keys for working with media.

Reporters get dozens of pitches every day. Don't just send an email and presume they got it. If it's important, call, text or IM to make sure.

Never call a TV station after 4 pm. They're scrambling to finish the newscast. Their meeting is most commonly around 9 a.m. Get your pitch in early is best,

Never issue a release and be unavailable. Have someone on-deck to do interviews throughout the day.

Know the deadline for your local weekly paper. And time your bit to be in their hands two days early for good measure.

Observe AP style / Inverted pyramid. If you want to make news, speak like a news reporter. They are likelier to use your news if it requires little modification.

Mass distribution v. select distribution. If you sent out a mass news release, it diminishes interest. Reporters know everyone else also got that news. If you work with a specific reporter, you put your fate in the hands of one outlet (and snub their competition).

Be careful playing favorites. Spread your news out thoughtfully so everyone gets a chance to lead.

Share a good news piece on your social media feed. And remember to thank and credit the outlet and reporter. This gives them more readers. They notice it.

Use their time wisely. If you call a news conference, it better be big. Be a source they regard for delivering news reliably, or they will write you off eventually.

Support materials help. If you have a short video clip, photographs, sound files, Q&A sheets, it all works to make your story more attractive because it allows the reporter to package and deliver the news with less effort.