

How to Pitch Your Events to the Press

One of the biggest ways we can make a difference through our campaigns is to generate media coverage and shape the conversation around our issues. We organize earned media events in order to influence public opinion, to move policy makers to support our cause, and to win our campaigns that save the planet and protect our communities. But if the press doesn't show up to cover the events, it's much harder to accomplish these goals.

To maximize your chances of success, follow the five tips below to pitch events to the press:

Be confident. You have an important story to tell. Speak clearly and wear your passion for the campaign on your sleeve. It also helps to practice before you make the call.

Use your hooks. A hook is an angle that shows the reporter that your event is worth covering. It's not enough to just say you're hosting an event, even if you know the event will be interesting. Before you start pitching, you should have an idea of what your hook is.

Do your homework. Before you start pitching, do some research to figure out who would be the best local reporters to reach out to, and how. Look for reporters whose beat, or issue area, is aligned with your event, such as political editors or environmental reporters. You can get a good sense of this by looking up past coverage to see what kind of things a particular reporter usually reports on.

Make it easy. Make sure they have access to all the background information they need. Provide them with well-prepared Sierra Club representatives they can interview and get quotes from. And make sure they have your email and phone number so that they can follow up with you if they have any questions.

Follow up. If they say they're interested in an event, follow up a few days out and remind them. If they can't commit to the event when you pitch them, follow up later and ask again—with as fresh a hook as you can provide. And if a reporter does show up to cover your event, take the opportunity to build a relationship with them.

News Hooks

Local interest / Unique, unusual, strange / New, timely, current event / Conflict, drama, controversy / Human, personal, emotional / Holiday or anniversary / Report, poll or study / Bill, law, vote, case, decision, ruling / Sheer size (ex. “Thousands rally” or “hundreds protest”) / Superlatives (ex. “The most”, “the worst”, “the dirtiest” or “the cleanest”)

Not-News Hooks

Event / Panel / Booth / Meeting

Your Turn

Use the space below to make a list of reporter contacts and draft a script for your pitch call for an upcoming event.

| Reporter Name | Beat / Topic Area | Outlet | Best way to reach them |
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Draft script for pitching an upcoming event: