

PITCHING BASICS

PREPARATION

KNOW YOUR MATERIAL

Have a pitch sheet with the most important and interesting aspects of your story in front of you when you call or draft your email.

Have a list of everyone else in your organization or related organizations who can be contacted and how to get a hold of them.

Is there a photo opportunity or do you have images to offer? Know where to direct reporters and cameramen for photo ops or what format your images are in.

Are there other resources that would be helpful in developing a balanced story? If you know of any, offer to share the details: web sites, contact information, etc.

KNOW THE OUTLET

Be sure that this is an appropriate outlet for your story — that the publication, station, or site regularly covers topics like yours.

Have a particular section in mind if you are pitching a general or managing editor.

KNOW THE REPORTER

What is their beat (topics they cover)? What have they written recently? How do they want to be contacted?

DELIVERING THE PITCH

BE CONCISE

Keep it simple: don't dress up your pitch by offering supporting points or unnecessary details.

Keep it short: the most important information is always offered first. In a press release or pitch letter it's in the first paragraph; in an email it's in the subject line and the first sentence; in a phone call it's in the first 15 seconds.

Example: "Hi Joe. My name is Amy Buringrud. I sent you an email last week about the Pink Martini benefit concert on the 16th. All the proceeds will go to the Nature Conservancy for our work in conserving 400 acres of critical butterfly habitat on the Oregon coast. I was calling to find out if you are interested in covering the story."

Or: "Hi Jane. My name is Amy Buringrud. I have a great profile for your lifestyle section. A farmer in our community has just agreed to donate \$5 million worth of land to the Nature Conservancy, which borders 400 acres of critical butterfly habitat on the Oregon coast, making it the largest protected Silverspot habitat in the United States."

PITCHING BASICS CONTINUED

SHIFT YOUR ANGLE ACCORDINGLY FOR EACH OUTLET

Try to think like the reporter you're talking to. Consider how the story will benefit this particular publication and how it will interest their readers.

OFFER WHAT YOU CAN

Is your story an example of a national trend? Do you know (or are you) an expert on the issue? Can you forward supporting facts, statistics, or resources?

BUT DON'T OFFER ANYTHING YOU CAN'T DELIVER

If you plan to pitch several outlets, don't offer an exclusive. If you aren't sure you can get an interview with someone, don't promise it. If the information is embargoed, don't offer it early.

TELL THE TRUTH

Lying is never a good idea.