



Bill Stoller's

Free Publicity

The Newsletter For PR-Hungry Businesses

Bill Stoller, Editor & Chief Publicity Insider

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Publicity On The Cheap, Part 2

How To Maximize Your PR Efforts in a Bad Economy

Let's continue our look at how to maximize your publicity and marketing efforts in a down economy. This month, I'll be focusing on the many free and low-cost services available -- including some that aren't widely known.

I'll also be sprinkling in some tips from some very sharp publicity seekers about how to get attention without spending much -- if any -- money.

Money Saver #5: Free Video Distribution Sites

Creating your own videos and having them embedded and viewed around the web is a terrific attention-getter. Here's a list of 29 sites that will host your video free of charge:

<http://www.jackhumphrey.com/fridaytrafficreport/list-of-29-free-video-sharing-sites/>

Money Saver #6: Free Instant Videos

If you have a webcam attached to your computer, you can create your own videos instantly and free at Viddler.com. No need to shoot a video and upload it -- Viddler captures the live stream from your webcam and microphone directly and in real time. You can then save the video and distribute it everywhere. Cool!

You've got to check this nifty online tool out: www.TokBox.com. You can create videos that are embedded directly into your email. Simply record your video message, type in the email address of the recipient, and out it goes. The possibilities are endless: you can demonstrate a product, record a personalized holiday greeting, and show a longtime media contact what the person behind the emails and phone calls really looks like!

Money Saver #7: Create Interview Podcasts For Pennies

Want some attention? Find the biggest name in your field that you can and ask them to do a brief telephone interview with you. Then, post the interview online (or, package it with other interviews and sell it as a product). It's very easy -- and cheap -- to do.

Step One: Sign up with Skype, the Internet telephone service that allows you to call other Skype users anywhere in the world for free using your computer. If the person you'd like to interview isn't a Skype user, no problem. SkypeOut is a cheap service (\$2.95/month for unlimited calls within the US, slightly more for overseas calls) that gives you the ability to call anyone using your Skype account.

Step Two: Record the interview using Call Graph, a nifty piece of freeware that starts automatically when you make a Skype call. When the interview is over, Call Graph saves the file as an mp3. <http://www.callgraph.in>

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Step Three: Upload your interview to your site, your blog, iTunes and other audio sharing services.

Step Four: Send out a press release and announce your interview in your ezine, on message boards, groups and in comments on other blogs.

GUEST IDEA: Toma Haines - AKA The Antiques Diva <http://www.antiquesdiva.com/>

“My tip for free publicity that works is to become a public speaker. I sent letters to every organization within a 3 hour radius offering to speak on my subject of expertise. Before long I had speaking engagements to groups of anywhere from 20 -2000 people and not only was my business being promoted but I've also found an extra income source, as I'm typically paid a nice honorarium for appearing. Each speaking engagement gives me free advertising opportunities as I'm promoted in the organization's newsletter (or website) and I'm typically allowed to distribute my brochure for my company and give a special "act now" discount offers. After each engagement I see a rise in the number of blog subscribers and tour participants! And with each engagement, I'm typically introduced to another person who might be looking for a speaker. It's amazing how interconnected these clubs are and what wonderful networking opportunities exist!”

Money Saver #8: Free Keyword Research Tools

In the Internet age, the role of the press release has expanded considerably. No longer is it simply a one way communication with journalists. Now, the press release is an integral weapon for building web traffic and reaching consumers directly, thanks to the art of search engine optimization.

Your releases need to be optimized for the right keywords to reach your target market. Here's a site that can help you find those elusive words and phrases -- and it's free! <http://seocompany.ca/tool/8-keyword-suggestion-tools.html>

Money Saver #9: Create Podcasts For Free

Podcasts are a great way to build a loyal audience. And it couldn't be easier to create and host a podcast without spending a penny.

To create your podcast: I recommend Audacity, a free, open-source recorder that's a snap to use. <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>

To get music for your podcast: The Podsafe Music Network offers loads of excellent music that's legally cleared. <http://music.podshow.com/>

To host your podcast: Find free, easy-to-use hosting at <http://www.podomatic.com/>

Money Saver #10: Use Twitter to Build Your Business

What started out as a means for folks to send silly micro-messages to one another is maturing into a useful marketing tool. Here's a superb guide on how to get the most out of this free service: www.caroline-middlebrook.com/blog/twitter-guide/

GUEST IDEA: Carol White - Live Your Road Trip Dream <http://www.roadtripdream.com>

“Write articles about your topic and post them to places like ezinearticles.com and articlecity.com and make them available on your own website in your media center. You never know where they will show up. In fact, an article I wrote over a year ago and it just showed up today on a website. How do I know? I have Google Alerts set for my name, my book name, and topics like road trips, RV trips, retirement, etc.”

Bill's Note: Try to make a list of ezines or websites that accept submitted articles. Hint: go to Google and type: (Your Subject Name, ex: Travel) and Submit Articles. Boom! A list of websites, publications, and ezines that are looking for content related to travel will appear.

Submitting articles and having them published can help your Google rankings. Google looks for one-way links that appear on websites that are similar in topic to your own website.

Need proof that this works? I wrote “*Smashing the Myth of the Press Release*” about 5 years ago; according to Google, that article currently appears on 518 websites!!

Money Saver #11: Get a High Google Rank at No Cost

1. Create a keyword-targeted article and submit it to a top site like ezinearticles.com or goarticles.com
2. Submit the article link to social networking sites using socialmarker.com
3. Link to the article in your blog and include the link when you comment on other blogs.

Happy Penny Pinching!

Bill's Corner

Let The Power Of The Associated Press' Special Editions Make You a Publicity Genius

As many longtime Publicity Insiders know, I've strongly touted the press clip-filling abilities of the Associated Press' Special Editions.

Special Editions' Editor Julia Rubin has just announced her new editorial schedule for 2009. Take great heed.

What is AP Special Sections? Every month, AP produces and distributes a collection of syndicated articles and accompanying photographs that cover timely everyday topics such as: holidays, back-to-school, gardening, etc.

Why is this section so important? If you or your product are covered in just one Special Edition article, you have a great chance of appearing in over 1,500 daily and weekly newspapers, and numerous TV and radio stations.

How do I contact Julia? Please direct questions and correspondence to:

Julia Rubin, Associated Press Special Editions
jrubin@ap.org
 450 W. 33rd Street - 14th Floor
 New York, NY 10001
 Phone: 212-621-7199

What is Julia looking for? Julia told *Free Publicity* that she would like to hear about trends and feature story ideas that tie in with the month's topic. She asked that no product sample be sent unless she requests them.

What is their 2009 Editorial Schedule?

| Topic | Editorial Submission Deadline | Dist. Date |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|------------|
| Pets | 1/10/09 | 3/03/09 |
| Your Career | 2/01/09 | 4/07/09 |
| Outdoors | 3/01/09 | 5/05/09 |
| Weddings | 4/01/09 | 6/02/09 |
| Back To School | 5/01/09 | 7/14/09 |
| Fall Homes/Housekeeping | 6/01/09 | 8/04/09 |
| Cars | 7/01/09 | 9/01/09 |
| Diet/Exercise | 8/01/09 | 10/06/09 |
| Holidays | 9/01/09 | 11/03/09 |
| Weddings, Summer Brides | 10/01/09 | 12/01/09 |

"Perfect Timing"

Right now, smart Publicity Insiders are drafting & distributing press releases & pitch letters tied into the lead times of the following media outlets:

Long Lead Magazines (such as Ladies' Home Jrl, Redbook) are working 5-6 month's in advance on: Mother's Day, Gardening & Lawn Care, Memorial Day, Father's Day, Summer Activities, Summer Travel, June Weddings, End of School

Newspapers - Work with no lead time to one month in advance.

Television - Generally work immediately to two month's in advance. Immediate stories go to the news assignment editor, advance stories go to the futures editor.

Regional Business Publications (such as Crain's NY Business) - One month to three months in advance.

Regional City Publications - (such as San Diego Magazine, Boston Magazine) - Two to three months in advance.

Online Pubs, ezines, blogs, social media - Immediate

AP Special Editions - Topics w/deadlines: Pets - 1/10/09, Your Career - 2/1/09, Outdoors - 3/1/09

Send AP press info to: Julia Rubin, jrubin@ap.org
 AP, 450 W. 33rd Street, 14th Fl. New York, NY 10001
 Phone: 212-621-7199

Here's some **upcoming seasonal events** that you can **tie your publicity efforts to** (note: dates are subject to change):

January

- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (Jan 19)
- US Presidential Inauguration Day (Jan 20)
- Women's Self-Empowerment Week (Jan 5 -11)
- Healthy Weight Week (Jan 18 - 24)
- Crime Stoppers Month, Family Fit Lifestyle Month
- National Mentoring Month, National Get Organized Month
- National Hobby Month, Financial Wellness Month
- National Clean Up Your Computer Month
- National Blood Donor Month

February

- Groundhog Day (Feb 2), Super Bowl XLIII (Feb 1)
- Grammy Awards (Feb 8 in Los Angeles)
- Valentine's Day (Feb 14), President's Day (Feb 16)
- Digital Broadcasting (HDTV) Replaces Analog (Feb 17)
- Mardi Gras Day (Feb 24)
- Academy (Oscar) Awards (Feb 22), Daytona 500 (Feb 24)
- National Consumer Protection Week (Feb 3-9)
- Random Acts of Kindness Week (Feb 11-17)
- American Heart Month, National Black History Month
- National Weddings Month

March

- NEA's Read Across America Day (Mar 2)
- International (Working) Women's Day (Mar 8)
- Daylight Savings Time Begins (Mar 8)
- Organize Your Home Office Day (Mar 10)
- St. Patrick's Day (Mar 17), Spring Weddings
- 1st Day of Spring (Mar 20)
- National Mom & Pop Business Owners Day (Mar 29)
- Newspaper in Education Week (Mar 2-6)
- Nat'l Cleaning Week (Mar 22-28)
- Nat'l Women's History Month, National Craft Month
- National Nutrition Month, Music in Our Schools Month
- Youth Art Month, Save Your Vision Month

FREE PUBLICITY

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PARTYLINE - A Roundup of Media Placement Opportunities

Here are this month's top listings from Partyline (<http://www.partylinepublishing.com>). Each month, we team up with Partyline to bring you exclusive inside info about reporters looking for stories, new publications and exclusive story placement opportunities. If you see a story opportunity that fits your company, jump on it quick — before word leaks out to the outside world (i.e. those poor misguided souls who are not Free Publicity subscribers!).

“60 Minutes”, the CBS-TV interview show celebrated its 40th birthday last September. The top rated Sunday news magazine show includes Katie Couric, Anderson Cooper, Steve Kroft, Morley Safir, and Andy Rooney among their many correspondents. The executive producer of the show is Jeffrey B. Fager. Patti Hassler (pjh@cbsnews.com) is the executive editor, and Michael Radutzky is the senior producer. Other producers include Robert Anderson (x2019), Reid Collins (x7847), Franklin Devine (x6675), Shari Finkelstein (x6200), Graham Messick (x2006), Dierdre Naphin (x6385), Katherin Olian (x6686), Michael Radutzky (x7551), and Ruth Streeter (x1941). Reach “60 Minutes” at CBS TV, 524 W. 57 St, New York, NY 10019, (212) 975-2006, fax: (212) 975-2019. **Bill's note: Email addresses are not supplied for their producers, it's best to give a call or send to their general email address: 60min@cbsnews.com. To call, use this phone number formula: 212-975-XXXX. Phone extensions are provided next to each producer's name.**

ABC-TV's “The View” is a daily morning talk show featuring guests who are currently in the news from the world of politics, entertainment, and publishing. Their producers are : Alexandra Cohen (alexandra.cohen@abc.com), supervising producer; Sue Solomon (susan.g.solomon@abc.com), talent producer; with Donald Berman (donald.berman@abc.com), talent executive. They can be reached at ABC Studios, 320 W. 66 St., New York, NY 10023. Sue Solomon's direct phone is (212) 456-0914; Donald Berman's direct dial is (212) 456-0913.

SHAPE Magazine, which is published by American Media, is dedicated to keeping its readers in the best physical shape possible, informing them about the latest and best in exercise and healthy eating. They follow the news in exercise equipment and trends, fitness, and food, and ways to keep in the best shape possible at all times. The editor-in-chief is Valerie Latona. Chris Tarrow is the managing editor and Jeanne Ricci is the deputy managing editor. They are reached at the magazine, 1 Park Avenue, 10 fl, New York, NY 10016, (212) 545-4800. Check their website at www.shape.com. Their email formula is firstinitiallastname@shape.com.

Nationally syndicated “The Bonnie Hunt Show” features actress and comedienne Bonnie Hunt, with her Chicago twang and easy going girl-next-door personality. Ms. Hunt sits down with a wide variety of guests in the daily syndicated talk show. Hunt also discusses the day's news topics. She talks to her audience and crew about anything and everything that's on her mind, including entertainment and pop culture. Don Lake is the executive producer along with Jim Paratore. Kevin Boyer is the features producer and can be reached at: kevin.boyer@bonniehunttv.com “The Bonnie Hunt Show” is produced out of The Culver Studios, 9336 W. Washington Blvd., Culver City, CA 90232, (310) 845-2555. For more specifics about suggesting guests for the show, go to: <http://www.bonniehunt.com/show>

GOOD Magazine is a print and online bi-monthly publication which launched two years ago, and in the face of the slump in magazine business is growing at a rapid pace. The magazine covers business and money, politics, technology, buying, science, environment, art and design, mobility, media, culture, education, and living. Their mission statement is on their first page - the magazine is written for people who “give a damn”. GOOD provides a platform for ideas, people, and businesses that are driving change in the world. The founder is Ben Goldhirsh, who is the chairman. Zach Frechette is the editor-in-chief; Noella Boudart is the editorial assistant. Morgan Clendaniel is deputy editor and Joaquin Trujillo is their photo editor. Andrew Price is their senior Web editor. They are reached at 6824 Melrose., Los Angeles, CA 90038, (310) 691-1030; Fax: (310) 691-1022. For more detailed information go to their Web Site: www.goodmagazine.com.

Delicious Living Magazine, established in 1985, is one of the leading consumer magazines in the natural products industry, carried by more than 1300 top natural food stores and **read by more than a million readers monthly**. They feature lifestyle, trend, and service-oriented materials, new research in foods and health, food features which cover a wide range of foods from vegetarian menus, internationally focused foods, etc. Their departments include: “Fresh”, “Quick & Easy”, “Parenting”, & “Beauty & Body. Nancy Coulter Parker (ncoulterparker@newhope.com) is the editor, and Katy Neusteter (kneusteter@newhope.com) is the managing editor. They can be reached at Delicious Living, 1401 Pearl St., Boulder, CO 80302, (303) 939-8440; Fax: (303) 939-9886. Check out their website: www.deliciouslivingmag.com.

PartyLine is the weekly round-up of media placement opportunities, the premier placement newsletter that is twice as good at less than half the cost of others. PartyLine is available by E-mail only on an annual basis, 52 weekly issues, for only \$167.50. Contact PartyLine at byarmon@ix.netcom.com, or at www.partylinepublishing.com. PartyLine is located at 35 Sutton Place, New York, NY 10022, (212) 755-3487; Fax: (212) 755-4859.

A Publicity Success Story

Employing A “One Step At A Time” Approach, A Publicity Seeker Lands A Coveted WSJ Feature

Mike Black’s strategy for pitching is to start out short and sweet, building up an information exchange over the course of a few interactions with a media contact. Black, the media relations expert at Ictus Initiative in Newton, Mass., believes that he gets a better reception by easing in - rather than crashing in - with a pitch. This step-by-step approach helped land a feature piece in *The Wall Street Journal* for one of his clients.

Background: Ictus Initiative specializes in PR for professional speakers, authors and consultants. It can be challenging to win coverage for such clients, Black explains, because they often don’t generate news themselves.

“It’s hard to get experts featured,” Black says. “Most times you have to sell a reporter on an issue-driven story. This requires responding to breaking news queries for experts from reporters, though occasionally, we target specific media outlets and pitch them ideas for stories.”

Black monitors news about key subject areas for his clients and looks for appropriate queries from [ProfNet](http://www.profnet.com) (www.profnet.com) or [HARO](http://www.helpareporter.com) (www.helpareporter.com). For one particular client, Carol Gignoux, an executive coach who works with people with attention deficit disorder, Black thought he could gather enough background to generate a story.

News peg: Gignoux works with adults with ADD, as opposed to children, which means she fills an unusual niche, Black explains. The media frequently report on ADD treatments for children, but adults who suffer from the disorder get little coverage.

“This is one of those clients where the public doesn’t really know about the subject,” Black says of Gignoux. That made it tougher to pitch her, since it wouldn’t be likely that the media would come looking for her. “You have to make whoever writes a story believe that it’s credible, and that people would actually want to hear about it.”

Black is an avid reader of “The Jungle,” a *Wall Street Journal* column by Kris Maher about recruitment, job-hunting and general career matters. The column runs Tuesdays in the paper’s “Personal Journal” section. “I knew that he often goes for offbeat stuff,” Black says of Maher, like a recent column about people who visit websites with “office cams” so they can watch other people working.

The pitch: Black knew he’d have to pull together a complete story if he stood a chance of getting Maher to bite on the adult ADD angle. He asked Gignoux to locate a client of

hers who’d be willing to be interviewed about his struggles with ADD. Black thought that might be a tough request, since adults are often hesitant to discuss the disorder.

“That’s part of the pitch, actually - the fact that there’s this stigma about being an adult with ADD,” Black explains. “They can’t focus on their work, and they’re too embarrassed to explain why.”

It was also important that Gignoux won approval from a professional person, since that kind of story would resonate with the typical *Journal* reader. “You have to give Maher a first-person story,” Black says. Fortunately, Gignoux brought Richard Bickford, a national sales manager for an electronics manufacturer, on board as an interviewee.

With an interview subject secured, Black turned his attention to writing a three-page backgrounder on adult ADD. He included statistics on sufferers, a profile of Bickford, Gignoux’s credentials as an expert, and reasons why Maher’s readers would be interested (because they might have ADD, might work with someone who does, or might not be aware that coaches like Gignoux can help treat the disorder).

Black wrote the backgrounder much like a *Journal* feature story, even including a news-style headline (“Lacking Focus, Many Talented Professionals Find Themselves Lost on the Job”).

With his material organized, Black began the pitching process. He sent Maher a very short email, simply introducing the story idea: “The idea is about talented professionals who are being labeled as incompetent or lazy in their companies because of their adult attention disorder,” Black wrote to Maher. “I’d like to email you an extended version of this idea, but only with your permission.”

Maher gave the thumbs-up, and Black sent the backgrounder. He phoned the writer a week later; Maher said he hadn’t read through all the material, but would give it another look and would consider the story.

Results: Within two weeks of Black’s first email, Maher agreed to a feature piece for “The Jungle” on adult ADD. Maher used Bickford’s ADD struggles as the opener to the article, and included quotes from Gignoux on how she coaches sufferers through their workdays.

Besides the great background material and the first-person source, Black thinks timing helped this pitch succeed. He emailed and phoned Maher only on Wednesdays, the day after his column was done, figuring that the writer would be pondering his next piece.

As for Black’s client, *The Journal* placement had a hard-and-fast result: She won four new coaching clients after it appeared.

7 Golden Secrets Of Generating News

For most companies, it is a rare occasion when they generate a captivating news story. Most organizations rely on product announcements, customers and business milestones to fill their press release pipeline, but unfortunately, that does not make headlines unless you are a Fortune 100 company. For the rest of us, we have to “create” news by leveraging smart, creative strategies that help put our company, services and products in the limelight.

You don't have to engage a public relations firm or even a PR expert. You just have to understand the principle of what makes news and how to turn your organization into a magnet for good press. Outlined here are seven secrets that you can apply today to generate headlines for your business:

1. Story Insertion: Read the News to Find Out What's Making Headlines One of the most basic ways to dig for stories is to read the news. In order to create news, you have to follow it. Companies should constantly monitor the news for recent trends in their industry and track the reporters that cover it. Whether it's the media's obsession with the recession, the upcoming election or even the holidays, trend stories come in bunches. By monitoring these trends or breaking news and specifically tailoring your pitch to reporters, you can insert your company directly into the conversation – provide an expert opinion, offer advice to those involved, share your relevant experience, forecast the impact on your market, etc.. This is also an opportunity to suggest a second story to a reporter (i.e. if you wrote about that topic, maybe you'd be interested in this story...).

2. Story Hijacking: Take Over the Conversation Instead of inserting your company into a news story, the key is to hijack the story and take it in a new direction, with the focus on you and your company. The goal is to make your company *the* source and *the* focus of a new article or discussion. Although an existing news item may have sparked the conversation, your job is to turn it into a conversation about your company. Are you reading articles about government regulations on recycling? Contact the reporter to let them know how this may impact your business sector, or how your company is going above and beyond the minimum government standards. Are the headlines concerned with the mortgage crisis? Contact reporters with a story about how it impacts your vertical market or how your products or services can save money for cost-conscious consumers.

3. Content is King: Have Content Ready for Immediate Consumption Reporters' requests often have quick deadlines. Whether they ask for b-roll or high resolution images, they usually want them quickly. It's important to have all materials, articles, digital assets, sound bites and multimedia readily available in case a reporter has an immediate request. Reporters are very deadline-oriented and sometimes they will choose to include your company in a story for the sole reason that you were prepared with materials faster than the competition. Being quick to respond can help turn a small mention into a cover story with the right supporting materials.

4. Fast Facts: We May Hate Math, But Reporters Love Numbers Fast facts are another way to squeeze all of the juice out of a small story and potentially turn it into something special. Polls, surveys and statistics can beef up a story and not only expand it on the page, but can also make it more effective. If your company has collected data and statistics on a product, industry or trend, sometimes one strong number can make an entire story by itself. Numbers are also “irrefutable” and objective – they can be proof positive of your position or claims. And if you turn those numbers into an eye-catching chart or graph, they can also help you garner more real estate on the page. Oftentimes, the visual aspect of a story is the most effective. Fast facts can often put the finishing touch on a story in order to transition a good story into a great one.

5. Hidden Treasure: Dig for Gems Every individual has a story to tell, and companies are no different. Use all of your “assets” to generate news – company, people, products, market and customers. Does your company have a quirky tradition, an unusual benefit or an eccentric founder? Has someone in your organization broken a world-record, appeared on a reality TV show or play in a band? You can't always push your company and your products as the lead for every news story, but you can find another way to get your air time. There are some themes that the media always look for; human interest stories, quirky or comical events, controversy, the unusual or unexpected and celebrity connections. Dig around your company and find the PR gold.

6. Cause a Commotion: Stir Up Some Controversy There are several ways for a company to command attention. If a company can create enough chaos or controversy, reporters are almost forced to speak with them. Commotion can be taking a hard stance on an issue, getting in the middle of a debate, supporting a controversial law or bill, making a bold statement or even creating a media spectacle. Anything that draws the attention of the general public instantly becomes newsworthy.

7. Free Real Estate: Some Things In Life Are Free Most news outlets are short staffed these days and are always looking for consumer-ready content. Scour the most influential publications in your sector. Do they accept bylined articles (submissions from outside experts)? Submit a proposal to the editor for an article that you can write. Do they have tips and advice for their readers? Submit a list of best-practices, tips or suggestions for publication. Do they have a directory listing of vendors or businesses? Submit a free company profile. There are thousands of free opportunities to take advantage of if you just seek them out.

Sandra Fathi is the founder and president of Affect Strategies, a public relations and marketing firm based in New York. Affect Strategies focuses on results-driven PR and marketing for small to mid-sized businesses in the tech sector. To find out more about Sandra and her company, visit www.affectstrategies.com, read her blog www.techaffected.com, or contact her at sfathi@effectstrategies.com.

8 Ways To Befriend The Media Via Email

How to Approach & Build Reporter Relationships, One Email Message at a Time

Back when PR pros and other publicity seekers schmoozed with journalists at a local bar, or bumped into them at events around town, it was a lot easier to make connections and start lobbing a few pitches their way. Now, years after email took over our lives, publicity seekers have to rely on an impersonal and easily disposable method of communication to make these crucial connections.

Since email is what we're stuck with, how can you engage a media contact in few words, and without the force of your personal charm? PR pros say that getting too chummy in an email - especially a message to a journalist you've never met - usually has the opposite effect (i.e., you sound a bit like a stalker). And a too-formal tone comes off as extra-stiff in an email.

Here's some guidance on hitting the right note in those first-approach e-mails.

1. Show you're a fan. "I can't think of a more simple, intuitive or appropriate approach to building relationships with journalists and editors via email than actually reading their content, and then commenting to them via email," says David Muise, vice president of PR at Full Spectrum Media in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

"It's a great introduction, requires no fluff and shows that you are practicing due diligence. It also shows that you are an active player in the story, and that you're not just sending materials blindly when you need something."

2. Give it the personal touch. Along those same lines, Kevin Aschenbrenner, senior account supervisor/PR for Jaffe Associates in Victoria, Canada, says to use names in your email pitch, and not just the ones you get from a mail merge. "Even if you're working off of a huge media list, start it with their name," says Aschenbrenner.

3. Just the facts, ma'am. "Emailing press isn't writing a love letter," says David Libby, principal of Libby Communications in Oakland, Calif. "It's akin to a job application.

The information should be factual, pertinent to the reporter's audience, quick to the point and mirror the reporter's style. If the information in an email, to a reporter, carries these qualities, consistently, email after email, then the reporter will develop trust for the PR person and might respond."

4. Email to help out, not just to pitch. Dylan Powell, a PR writer at Houston's Origin Design, practices the "three to one" rule. He contacts journalists three times with helpful background info or comments before sending them one pitch.

5. The need for speed. "If a PR representative replies to journalists' questions with lightning speed, it automatically shows diligence and a commitment to assist," says Matthew Zintel, managing director of Zintel PR in Los Angeles. "That goes a long way

in forming a relationship outside of email. I can't tell you how many times an editor or writer has thanked us for quickly answering email questions just minutes after receiving them, no matter the time."

6. Chill out. "Relax your tone," advises Kevin Quartz, PR director at Harrisburg, Pa., ad agency Pavone.

"Many pitches sound too polished, like every word has been agonized over and scrutinized by a team of writers, because they often have. The most effective and personal email communications read like conversations between two friends - as if you wrote the email just for them."

Kacie Main, an account executive at O'Connell & Goldberg PR in Hollywood, Fla., says she imagines she's chatting up a media contact over the phone. "In order to build relationships through email, you have to write them as if you're on the phone. You would never call someone and immediately jump into your pitch. You would say 'hi, how are you?' And when hanging up, you wouldn't say 'best regards,' you would say 'thanks' or 'talk to you soon.'"

But don't get too friendly: "Don't act like someone's best friend in the first email," says Karen Campbell, senior public relations manager for Zondervan, a publisher based in Grand Rapids. Kevin Quartz agrees: "Keep it professional. There's a fine line between conversational and awkwardly personal. Don't ask how their family is doing if you've never met them."

Think hard about that subject line: "You need to make your subject lines count," says Aschenbrenner. "'New Partners Join Firm' is something I see a lot. They don't even put the firm name in the subject. I try to write subjects like headlines. You want to snag a reporter so they open the email, or at least read the first few sentences in the preview pane."

7. The five-second scan. Elizabeth Robinson, president of Volume PR in Centennial, Colo., got a grateful response to a short-and-sweet pitch she sent to a *Fortune Small Business* reporter who liked the fact that she didn't waste his time. "This is not an age where people curl up with a cup of a coffee to read emails," says Robinson. "We scan everything."

8. Try the bulleted approach. "We've moved away from the 'pitch and attached release' format towards a series of easily digestible bullets of information incorporated into the body of the e-mail," said Kevin Quartz. "This makes the entire email look like the information is being delivered directly to the recipient. I write out all my pitches ahead of time and make sure that they are no longer than five to seven sentences. That ensures they don't run beyond the first part of an email. Reporters don't scroll."

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Rubel's Rolodex by Gina Rubel, President, Furia Rubel Communications**Associated Press' Regional Bureau Chiefs**

If you are trying to promote a product or pitch a story worthy of coverage in any designated market area, the regional office bureau chiefs of the Associated Press are great contacts. Pitch a winning story to a regional bureau chief, and it may hit AP's national wire offering news, photos, graphics, audio and

video to 1,700 U.S. newspapers and 6,000 broadcast outlets worldwide.. Below are the bureau chiefs of the top designated market areas in the country.

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Gina Rubel is a proactive communicator, public relations practitioner and lawyer, with nearly 15 years public relations experience. Her firm, Furia Rubel provides strategic planning and public relations services to lawyers, professional service and B2B companies, educational and nonprofit industries. Stories about their clients have been seen and heard internationally. Their public relations programs put clients in front of the people who matter most. For more information, go to www.furiarubel.com or call 215-340-0480.

Bill's Note: If you want to take your publicity campaign to the next level, I highly recommend using Gina's services.