Communicating with media outlets about your organization's news and events can be an effective way to reach potential visitors. Here are our top tips to help you share your story.

HOW TO TELL IF YOUR STORY IS NEWSWORTHY

Journalists receive between 51 and 100 email pitches in a single week. That's why when reaching out to media contacts, it's important to make sure your message is newsworthy and relevant - is it a story the outlet would typically cover?

- **Timeliness** - New or just happened or upcoming?
- **Significance** - Affects a large group of people
- **Proximity** - The closer to home, the more relevant to media
- **Prominence** - Someone or something famous is involved
- **Uniqueness** - Quirky, original, never been done before
- **Usefulness** - Changes someone's life
- **Human interest** - Appeals powerfully to emotions and evokes strong responses such as laughter, sadness, urgency or need for help

DEVELOPING AND SHARING STORY IDEAS

- Create a media list by researching the local news outlets in the area you want to reach, and the contacts at each outlet who typically cover the type of news you are sharing.
- Draft a story idea or "pitch" for media that succinctly summarizes the story you'd like a journalist to cover. Answer the questions who, what, when, where, why and how in the pitch. This pitch should be customized to each reporter and the type of outlet they work for (print, online, radio, television). Include a photo or other visual if you can, showing your business/event or an image that is relevant to your story idea. Let media know if you have b-roll video and high-res photos available, especially if they're located in the Twin Cities or other markets, to increase the likelihood of coverage.
- If the story idea is quick and to the point, a short email pitch works. If you want to share more specific details, consider drafting a longer-form press release along with a quick note inviting media to consider covering it. Be sure to start with the most important/relevant information first, then provide additional details. Press releases can be copied and pasted into an email, or attached as a PDF (although many media outlets prefer no attachments in emails, so pasting into an email is the preferred method).
- Send story idea pitches and/or press releases to reporters in individual emails. Most journalists strongly prefer to communicate via email vs. phone.
- If you do not receive a response within a week, it's ok to follow up *once* with an email. However, do not continue contacting media repeatedly about the same story idea if you do not hear back. They will let you know if they are interested in doing a story.
    - If there are interesting new details or developments to the story after you first pitched the idea, it's ok to follow-up with these updates. But again, limit follow-ups as too many follow-ups is a pet peeve of most journalists.

INTERVIEW TIPS

- Consider identifying several guests and/or employees that media can speak with for the story - it's good to know who your spokespeople will be and what their availability is, since most reporters are working on a deadline.
- Feel free to ask the reporter for their questions (or type of questions) ahead of time to help you prepare.
- Nothing is truly "off the record" - do not share anything that you would not want the outlet to cover.

FREE MEDIA RELATIONS TOOLS

- **HARO:** Short for "Help A Reporter Out," this platform connects journalists with experts. Subscribe to receive daily emails listing out media queries about a range of topics including travel.
- **Anewstip:** Search for media contacts based on what they've written or tweeted about in the past. Anewstip users can also subscribe to public media lists created by other users.
- **BuzzSumo Journalist Profiles:** Gather useful intel on journalists, including their name, location, and email, and track their article history to better understand their areas of interest. There is a free, 30-day trial.
- **Muck Rack:** If you want to read recent stories from a particular journalist, search the reporter's name + "Muck Rack" online, and often you can find their profile that includes background information, recent articles and more.
- **Google Alerts:** Track your media coverage by setting up Google Alerts. Be sure to share media coverage on social media, your website, at your location, in e-newsletters, etc.!

SHARE YOUR NEWS AND EVENTS WITH VISIT DULUTH!

Tell us about your organization's news and events, and we'll promote them online, on social media and more.

TWIN CITIES MEDIA CONTACTS

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(CURRENT AS OF SPRING 2022. EMAIL CONTACTS SUBJECT TO CHANGE.)