

Pitching

Takeaways in this chapter:

- Create a “use case” and “value statement” to quickly communicate what your company does.
- Pitch smaller blogs first and build credibility to pitch bigger outlets.
- Keep pitches short and not about you.
- Build a relationship with reporters by sending them links and checking up on them from time to time.

There is no “proven system” to get journalists to respond to your inquiries. However, after three years as a tech reporter and countless conversations with founders and reporters, I’ve collected the tactics that will increase your chances of building a relationship with members of the media.

Step 1: Know Thyself

Journalists are constantly bombarded with convoluted pitches from entrepreneurs who are so immersed in their own industry that they have difficulty describing their business to others.

To combat any confusion, create a **value statement** and a **use case**.

A **value statement** is a one sentence description about your company and is often the first sentence of your “about” page. A value statement is devoid of jargon and acronyms and is understandable regardless of someone’s technical expertise. It’s okay to be a bit vague for the purposes of clarity.

“People talk about the idea of doorknobs, without actually using the word ‘doorknob.’ So a new idea for a doorknob becomes ‘an innovation in residential access.’”

- Dan Pallotta,
founder of Pallotta TeamWorks
[\(source\)](#)

Examples:

- “Google organizes the world’s information.”
- “Hipmunk is a travel search site that aims to take the agony out of travel planning.”
- “Fab is the world’s most valuable design resource.”

A **use case** is an example of how a customer would use your product. A use case is as long as a paragraph and demonstrates a common use for your product or service.

Examples:

The Interview

Takeaways in this chapter:

- Determine the 2-3 points you want to get across in an interview.
- Have a few prepared anecdotes ready to support your talking points.
- Most reporters ask the same questions. Prepare for them.
- Stand when you talk on the phone.
- Don't waste the hours after an interview: follow up with helpful information.

View every conversation with a reporter as an opportunity. Journalists often spend entire days conducting interviews with various sources who are unprepared, apathetic, or nervous. With a little bit of preparation, you'll be able to come across as confident while controlling the overall direction of the interview.

Determine Your Talking Points

Before prepping for your interview, determine what you would like to be the reporter's key takeaways of the interview. These takeaways are called "talking points."

Your talking points may be focused on announcing a new product, establishing yourself as a subject matter expert, or setting your company apart from your competition.

Ask yourself: "What are the only two or three things I want the reader to remember after reading this article?" Examples of talking points:

- Our new widget will be released Friday.
- Our company is hiring.
- We are building a company culture that encourages flexible work schedules.
- Our product has been downloaded 20,000 times.

Once you establish these points they should be the foundation for your entire interaction with the reporter.

Answering Questions

To give your best interview you need to master the "sound byte" and the "anecdote."

The Sound Byte