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How to Build a Media List

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A media list is a compilation of media contacts including editors, reporters, journalists and any other news sources that you intend to reach out to for editorial purposes.

A media list is an important aspect of PR, as it helps you organize your media contacts and keep track of past connections or outreach.

By taking time to search for and add contacts to your list, you can ensure that the specific contact aligns with your topic and story style.

How to Find Media Contacts:

Finding the contact information for media professionals can be tricky. There are many different approaches to finding media contact information, several of which involve PR Tools. A few of these tools are [Cision](#), [Meltwater](#), and [Muck Rack](#). These tools act as media databases and distribution networks for PR agencies and corporations. They have unique access to the private contact information of media professionals and enable PR specialists to access emails and phone numbers more easily. As great as these platforms are, they do come at a steep price and are not cost-friendly to smaller-scale PR professionals.

If you are operating without a large budget, there are lots of free ways to access media contact information. More often than not, publications will have a contact page that allows you to find the name and contact information of a specific person. This is a great way to find the editor or writer you are intending to pitch! Twitter and Google are also excellent resources for finding the right person to pitch a story to.

When we're looking for media contacts, we're not only looking for their name and email address. We're also looking to make sure that their audience and writing style fits the pitch we are intending. We don't want to pitch a municipal affairs reporter with a beauty and lifestyle brand pitch! Take the time to research each individual before you consider adding them to your media list.

What To Include in Your Media List:

Building out a media list does not have to be complicated. In fact, the more simple a list is, the better! When we're creating the list, we typically use Microsoft Excel or Google Sheets. These tools offer an easy way to create columns and rows that fit our required categories. The categories are dependent on your goal, but for the majority of the time must include the following:

- The publication that the contact works for
- The name of the individuals
- Their role within the publication
- Their contact information - preferably email
- Additional pitching notes

Once you have these columns laid out, you can begin to fill them in with the right information! See an example of a completed media list below:

| Outlet Name | Contact Name | Contact Title | Contact Email | Pitch notes |
|--------------------------|--------------|-------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| Example Publication Name | John Smith | Editor | example@gmail.com | Not a fit |
| Example Publication Name | Jane Doe | Food Journalist | example@gmail.com | |
| Example Publication Name | Betty White | Assignment Editor | example@gmail.com | Requested more information! |
| Example Publication Name | Bob Kovacs | Editor | example@gmail.com | |
| Example Publication Name | James Jones | Segment Host | example@gmail.com | |
| Example Publication Name | Sarah Nelson | Editor | example@gmail.com | Link Published |
| Example Publication Name | James Jones | Segment Host | example@gmail.com | |

How to Use the Media List:

Once you have your media list set up, you can begin updating the sheet with contacts! Every time you find a contact that is an appropriate fit for your pitch, you can add the contact to your spreadsheet. Using their personal information, we can fill in the columns we previously made (publication, name, role, contact info, and notes) on the sheet. By adding these features and details, we're actively building out our media list and creating a useful database resource.

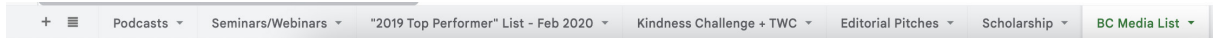
Once you feel that you have added enough contacts to your media list, you can begin pitching! Work your way from top to bottom, taking the time to send each pitch individually and personalize every message. For every email sent, make sure that you mark the contact as completed. This could be a note in the notes bar or a specific colour highlight. By marking a contact as completed, we know that we have sent the pitch to them and can move forward accordingly.

Using colour coding for a media sheet:

- If a pitch email bounces or the contact rejects the pitch, you can change the highlighted colour to red to show it as finished. If the pitch lands and becomes a story, you can highlight it green to show it as successful! If there is a story or website mentioned to link to, include it in the pitch notes.
- If your pitch contact remains unresponsive, you can leave them highlighted as the original colour. It is a good idea to make a note of when the last pitch or follow-up pitch was sent out for your reference.

Other useful tips:

- Follow-Up Emails: Once you have completed your pitch list, it is a good idea to plan a follow-up pitch! A few days after the original pitch, you can return to your list and make note of which contacts were unresponsive. You can then resent the email pitch to these unresponsive contacts and remind them of your original pitch!
- Starting New Tabs: For each pitch or relevant pitch list, we suggest creating a new spreadsheet tab. Having separate tabs helps you better organize your pitches and distinguish which pitches were sent to what lists. Example of tabs:



Building a media list takes time, but by putting in the work to find the right contacts, you can reduce your time spent pitching. Putting in the research, time, and effort to build an effective list will save you lots of time and stress down the road. Think of your list as an ongoing database and over time you will create a Rolodex of meaningful media connections that can be used for a variety of clients, industries and pitches!