



Media Pitching 101

Your guide to best practices and a better understanding of how to secure media stories

What is a Media Pitch?

A media pitch is a brief email offering a news story to a journalist or editor at a newspaper, magazine, radio or television station.

This is where you tell the media why they should cover your story, build relationships with them and show that you are in-tune with their work. A pitch can be sent alone (pitching a story idea) or it can be sent along with a media advisory or a press release.

News Value: You are the storyteller on behalf of your own story and the story of the CF community. The media's job is to tell *a* story, not necessarily *your* story. Your job is to make it so they see that your story adds news value. **What makes news?** Relevance, human interest, and emerging trends.

The Timeline:

- Decide the story you will pitch
- Draft your pitch
- Build your media list
- Pitch
- Follow-up

Media Lists: Understand the “decision-makers” at news outlets.

- Newspaper – editor; journalist; reporter
- Website or blog - editor
- Radio – news director; reporter; host



- Television – assignment editor; reporter; producer

Do your research on media contacts before adding them to your media list. Journalists are more likely to respond to pitches that are of interest to them and are relevant to stories that they would typically cover.

How to Draft an Effective Pitch: Start by asking yourself the questions below.

- **Am I personalizing this to the recipient/outlet?**
- **What is the objective of this pitch?**
- **Who is the key target audience?**
- **Is my subject line interesting?** (The subject line of your email pitch must contain your news hook – the one thing that makes your story stand out and demand a journalist’s attention).
- **Why is this news?** (Your story must contain some element that makes it a ‘first’, disruptive, innovative, counter-intuitive, or a powerful human interest story).
- **Do I have a news hook?**
- **How can I make this pitch more effective?**

Example of a Media Pitch:



Subject: Cystic Fibrosis Canada Petitions for Better Access to Rare Disease Medications

Hi [insert journalist's name],

This election season, Cystic Fibrosis Canada is asking Canadians to do [whatever it takes](#) and sign an online petition calling on candidates to prioritize the creation of a rare disease strategy to improve access to drugs for rare diseases, like cystic fibrosis (CF).

Canada is one of the few developed countries without a rare disease strategy.

Without a strategy to fairly assess drugs for rare diseases, access to these medicines is limited through publicly funded drug programs – despite the drugs being approved by Health Canada. With soaring costs of pharmaceuticals and little support from public programs, Canadians with rare diseases can't access the medicines they need.

I'd be happy to connect you with a Canadian living with cystic fibrosis who can speak about the challenges they have experienced accessing medicines they need. Alternatively, I can connect you with an expert from Cystic Fibrosis Canada who can speak about:

- Why Canadians with a rare disease are having difficulty accessing the medicines they need
- The current status of the drug review program in Canada and why Cystic Fibrosis Canada is seeking help from Canadians through this petition
- Information about cystic fibrosis and drugs approved by Health Canada that are currently unavailable through public programs

For more information, please contact me for further details.

Thank you,

[insert your name + contact information]

When to Send Your Pitch: Use your best judgement. Best practices show that Mondays aren't a great day to pitch. Send your pitches Tuesdays-Fridays at the beginning or end of the day.

When to Follow Up: If you haven't heard back from the journalist, you may want to follow up with them via a phone call or email. Before a follow up call, consider the following; **be quick, be ready to answer questions on the spot, and don't say anything you aren't sure about.**