

EARNED MEDIA » MASTERY

THE MINI GUIDE TO GAINING POSITIVE
COVERAGE FOR YOUR CLIENTS OR BRAND





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At this year's Earned Media Mastery virtual summit, registrants were able to enjoy 14+ hours of content thanks to our stellar lineup of speakers. Over 35 PR experts, thought leaders, business owners, agency and corporate professionals, and current and former journalists shared on a variety of topics related to building positive media coverage for your clients or brand.

We compiled some of the top insights from the event into the next 6 pages, breaking them down by:

- The newsworthy story
- The winning pitch
- The trusted resource
- The tools of the trade

To see what our three keynote speakers—**Michael Smart, Katie Paine, and Isabel Lara**—had to say on the topic of earned media, check out [“How to win at pitching and stay friendly with journalists: Top tips from the 2021 Earned Media Mastery virtual summit keynotes.”](#)



THE NEWSWORTHY STORY


PR DOESN'T DICTATE THE NEWS CYCLE.

Even if you have the perfect story, it must have a place in the present narrative or strike a chord with a journalist. Successful PR pros have learned to navigate the ebb and flow of the cycle. In her session, *Making the Most of the News Cycle: Second-Day Angles*, Beth Casteel, Senior Counsellor at The Reis Group, says, “The more we can follow the news and anticipate these cycles the more we can provide reporters what they want when they need it and get our experts and angles into their coverage.”

Inserting your brand or client into a news story by offering a new angle or expert commentary is an effective and proven way to generate coverage. But to do so, you need to get the topic and the timing right. Having a [media monitoring tool](#) set up with keywords for your brand, competitors, and industry will help you spot potential newsjacking opportunities and jump on them quickly.

THE THREE STAGES OF A NEWS STORY

Understanding where you are in the news cycle is the first step in successfully inserting your client or brand into the narrative. In his session, *Understanding the Narrative: Using the 3 Stages of a Story*, Stefan Pollack, Founder and CEO of The Pollack Group, broke down the three stages:



Mirror: The media is reporting the basic facts on what is happening. In this stage, providing meaningful data and insights into the unfolding event is your best bet. But, if you or your client is not a natural fit and don't have anything relevant to add, Stefan says, “Trying to fit a square into a circle at this stage is not advised.”

Picture: The media is exploring the impact of the event and providing further context. In this stage, journalists are seeking expert commentary. One exceptional strategy for newsjacking is if your client can report on the news with a perspective that hasn't been explored yet.

Window: The media is beginning to look ahead, trying to anticipate how this event has or will change daily life. In this stage, you'll find success by sharing trend data, expert commentary, and the steps your client is taking to prepare for the long-term.

Not every story will be the right fit for your brand or client so, as Stefan says, “**Don’t act like an expert when you’re not.**” If you have to justify your participation in the narrative, it’s not the right one for you.

The longer you’re in PR, the more second nature identifying the stages of the news cycle and anticipating the needs of journalists will become.



THE WINNING PITCH

WHEN IT COMES TO PITCHING, PERSONALIZATION IS KEY.

It may be more time consuming and require a greater level of effort, but as Katy Pollard, Director of Listening Pig PR, says, “If you want to get quality high profile coverage on a regular basis, it’s much more effective to tailor each pitch to individual publications.”

HOW TO BECOME A PRO AT PITCHING

The pitch begins in the subject line. Nikki Woods, returning Earned Media Mastery speaker and CEO of Nikki Woods Media, says to preview the story’s value in the subject line—because you don’t know if your email will get read. Similarly, Katy Pollard says to, “Sum up your really exciting story in 10 words and that will be your email subject header. Journalists call this the ten-word top line and it’s probably the most important part of a pitch.”

Even if a journalist opens the email, there are still no guarantees. Ami Neiberger-Miller, CEO of Steppingstone LLC, shares in her session, *When Your Media Pitch Falls Flat: How to Resuscitate It for Success*, that reporters will often only read the first few lines of your pitch. Your story hook should be right at the top—or you risk losing the journalist’s attention.

HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY PITCH BROADCAST

Pitching broadcast is its own challenge. After reading thousands of pitches as a broadcast producer, Celena Fine, Vice President at Tier One Partners, has three tips to keep in mind:

- **Keep it concise:** The pitch is the time to spark initial interest, not get every key message across.
- **Keep it conversational:** Producers read a lot of pitches every day and a dense, jargon-filled pitch is exhausting.
- **Keep out the kitsch:** If it takes too much brain power to decipher, producers will keep moving.

Depending on where and to whom you are sending your broadcast pitch, adjust your language as needed. Gillian Small, President of Gillian Small Public Relations, says that if you are pitching the news desk of a station, **you should have a single news hook and get straight to the point.** Be factual, concise, and even try to write the email in the way you imagine the story being read on air. For producers, Gillian personalizes the pitch by mentioning the news hook, but also stating the deliverables she has ready, any exclusive content available, and why this story is a fit for the producer's show.




THE TRUSTED RESOURCE

BUILDING POSITIVE AND BENEFICIAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH JOURNALISTS IS AT THE HEART OF SUCCESSFUL MEDIA RELATIONS.

But what is a PR pro to do when their emails go unanswered and they are unable to reach journalists at their old desk phones?

TWITTER TRICKS FOR CONNECTING WITH JOURNALISTS

Journalists make up the largest category of Twitter's verified users. A [2021 study](#) revealed that 73% of journalists said that Twitter is their most valuable social media platform. If used properly, Twitter may reach journalists where calls and emails have failed. But it's about having authentic human interactions, not going into full sales mode. Which is why Nikki Woods recommends using your personal social media accounts as opposed to your company account.



In his presentation, *The 20-Minute Twitter Rule to Media Relations Success*, Devin Knighton, the Director of the PR Intelligence Lab at Brigham Young University, promises that using Twitter to build relationships doesn't have to be time consuming.

He breaks down his 20-minute Twitter rule into four steps:

STEP ONE

Build private Twitter lists of journalists and media professionals. If you're having trouble identifying the right journalists to add to your list, Agility's [database](#) of over 1 million unique contacts is the place to start. Learn [how to identify media contacts on Agility](#).

STEP TWO

Use Twitter's [TweetDeck](#) to easily see what people in your lists are tweeting.

STEP THREE

Spend 20 minutes, three times a week checking your lists (that's only an hour a week!).

STEP FOUR

Engage with smart, authentic comments. Likes can get lost, emails can go unread, but comments are eye catching.



THE TOOLS OF THE TRADE

WHAT'S IN YOUR TOOLBOX?

The future of PR technology is geared towards creating more ways to help PR professionals drive business outcomes for their clients or brand, and increase the number of channels that PR can use to connect with the media.

THE THREE-PRONGED APPROACH

PR pros are often time poor, which makes having the right platform to streamline your workflow an essential. Kyle Villeneuve, Senior Client Success Specialist at Agility PR Solutions, shared the winning three-pronged approach that he uses to help his PR clients get their content in front of the right people and amplify their message.

EMAIL DISTRIBUTIONS

Using a platform with an integrated database—like Agility—allows you to build a list of your contacts and send personalized emails.

One of Agility’s many useful features is the reporting function that allows you to see who has opened or interacted with your emails so that you can strategize on how to follow up most efficiently. Check out this [short video](#) to help you nail your next email distribution.

NEWSROOM

Newsrooms are beneficial as they allow you to “house” your story somewhere credible online. You’ll then have a URL to include in internal communications and social promotion, giving your story more visibility and longevity. Check out this [video](#) for some tips on making the most out of newsrooms.

NEWSWIRE

The [newswire](#) is a tried, true, and tested way of getting content out and the final piece of the three-pronged approach. Newswires are great for larger corporate announcements (such as financial statements or changes in leadership) as they guarantee that the release will be delivered to the outlets in the newswire circuit and that someone at that publication will look at it.

Bonus:

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE STORY?

One of the major errors people can make after they earn media coverage is to do nothing. Earned media doesn’t exist in a vacuum. Share your coverage and take advantage of the credibility and authority earned media provides your brand.

In his session, *It’s a Hit. Now What?*, Chris Dickerson, Director of Digital at Verde Brand Communications, shares the ways you can leverage your earned media on your website and social to boost conversions:

- **On the home page:** Use “As Seen On” logos for increased credibility and third-party verification of your brand.
- **On the product page:** Add any awards you’ve received or mentions in relevant outlets that will build trust with potential buyers.
- **In email marketing:** Break up your promotional content by sharing your coverage.

- **On social:** Let others do the talking for you. Additionally, by sharing your coverage you support and amplify the work of the publication and journalist (which will hopefully get you on their radar for future publicity opportunities!)

But you have to be quick to share, which is why media monitoring is so essential. Most journalists won't have the time or patience to alert you when the story is released. It's up to you to make sure that you're monitoring for your brand or client so you never miss a mention.

- **In paid ads:** Spice up your ad copy with earned coverage or award mentions. Chris thinks this is a fun way of testing which copy drives more traffic.

WHAT NEXT?

If you want to learn more about how outreach, monitoring, and media intelligence services can boost your earned media, book a free [demo](#) today and get a feel for Agility's integrated media relations solution.

There are many more insights to be had from the 2021 Earned Media Mastery virtual summit speakers and sessions.

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TO THE CONTENT, USE THE
CODE "AGILITY" TO SAVE \$300
ON AN ALL-ACCESS PASS.**

