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Sell Yourself Without Selling Your Soul™

7 Ways To Make The Media Hate You (... And 1 Way To Make Them Swoon.)

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1. Be vague + boring.

Journalists and producers field hundreds of press releases and pitches every single week – sometimes every **DAY**. They don't have time to try to “figure out” what makes your story compelling or relevant for their audiences.

Think of it like this: would you go into a clothing store and buy an outfit that was sort of OK, but a little sloppy? One that needed lots of tailoring to make it wearable and attractive? Maybe, if you were in a total bind, but ... probably not. You'd buy something that was perfect for you — ready to wear, right out of the store.

It's the same with the media. They're looking for “ready to wear” (or rather, “ready to broadcast”) stories that their audiences will love. They don't have time for tweaking or tailoring. That's **YOUR** job.

Here's an example of a vague, boring headline for a press release:

Nutritionist offers 5 tips to stay healthy during stressful times.

And here's an example of a great headline:

It's tax time! What's in your lunch box? The top 5 worst foods to snack on when you're stressed — and what to nosh on, instead.

2. Be long-winded.

It takes about [7 seconds](#) for someone to form a first impression of you. In the media? It's three.

Long-winded paragraphs are simply too time-consuming for journalists to weed through. Unnecessary wordiness will destroy your chances of getting booked.

After all: if you can't sum up your points quickly, in writing, with plenty of time to prepare, how will you do it on air with just seconds to respond?

Use bullet points to break up long paragraphs into sound bites, and trim, trim, trim.

Aim to make just **ONE** big point, not seventeen micro-points. Have a stance and stick to it.

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3. Include lots of typos and grammatical errors.

Sloppiness destroys trust and makes you seem like a slob. It's the verbal equivalent of walking into a job interview with spaghetti sauce smeared on your blouse or tie.

Don't do it.

Pro tip: Use [Grammarly.com](https://www.grammarly.com) to thoroughly proof your pitches. Works like a charm.

4. Be threatening and unpleasant.

When you include an “implied” threat in your pitch — like, “This is a really hot topic, so I’d get on it if I were you. Somebody else will snap it up, if you don’t” — you become an instant irritant. Nobody wants to be threatened at work. At that includes people working in the media.

If you want to create a sense of genuine urgency, you can do it without being creepy.

Here’s an example of how to do it, elegantly:

“Because of {recent major news event}, this is a particularly important and timely lesson. I’d love to deliver it to your audience, while {event} is fresh in people’s minds. Together, we can work to empower {type of person} and perhaps prevent a future tragedy.”

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5. Make them hunt to find your bio and credentials.

Journalists need proof that you are who you say you are. And they need it immediately.

Always provide a clear, well-written bio that shows your job title or position, training, publications, or other forms of credibility.

Tailor your bio to their audience. (For example, if you're pitching yourself to a podcast for working moms, mention the fact that you're the former advice columnist for an award-winning parenting magazine — even if it was a decade ago.)

Stumped on how to write a good bio? [Use this cheat-sheet](#) from copywriter Alexandra Franzen, or study the websites of your favorite entrepreneurs and pay attention to how they're structuring their stories.

6. Be disorganized, hard to reach, or just a plain ol' diva.

Once the media wants to book you, you'd better be ready to leap — at a moment's notice. Keep your phone on. Check your email and respond quickly. Make sure you've got access to the tools you need to do a stellar job — like a hands-free headset for your phone, or a webcam and [professional set-up](#) for your Skype interview.

Also: make sure you've got visuals at your fingertips. If a journalist asks for your headshot (or photos of your hot new product) you can't say, "Let me book a shoot and get back to you." It's now or never. Be ready.

And for goodness sakes ... don't make special requests or diva-esque demands ("I'd really prefer a 10am call, because I have a 9am yoga class...").

Sharing your message in the media is a privilege, not a birthright.

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7. Wait until your hot story is old news.

Timing is everything. Act swiftly, and don't contact the media once your story has gone cold. But, be aware that different media outlets have different news cycles — magazines are generally working on their fall issues in the spring, while TV stations tend to field fresh stories every day, or every hour.

Pro tip: Prepare topics that you can easily talk about, any time, and then wait for a major cultural event or crisis to hit the news. That's your cue to pitch.

For example: wait for a celebrity divorce to get splashed across all the gossip blogs — then whip out the press release you've already prepared on “communication tips for newlyweds,” tweak the intro to reference the latest celeb divorce, and jet it out!

And 1 tip to make the media SWOON over you.

1. Actually care.

When you genuinely care about your audience — when your intention is to serve, inspire, entertain, inform and truly help people — it shows.

It shows in your pitch, in your press release, in the phrasing of your bio ... and in the way you share your ideas during your media appearance.

So, don't pitch stories about topics that you don't really care about just to get media attention. In the end that won't serve you or your audience.

Don't try to be someone you're not! (Because we know.).

Focus on the people that your heart is truly moved to serve. Make them your focal point. Let your vulnerability shine, even if it means that you become emotional during your interview or appearance. It's much better to be natural than to be perfect — or slick.

Essentially? Be a human being with a big, warm heart. Prep your material so it's easy to book you.

And the media will adore you.

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About Susan Harrow

Susan Harrow is a top media coach, consultant and marketing expert whose clients include everyone from rock stars to the CEOs of Fortune 500 companies, as well as entrepreneurs, coaches, consultants, speakers, and authors.



For the past 23 years she's helped clients and seminar participants shine as guests on CBS' 60 Minutes, Oprah, Good Morning America, The Today Show, Fox News, Bill O'Reilly, Larry King Live, The Food Network, etc. You may know her as the "Go To Girl" for getting on Oprah. But what you probably don't know is that she was almost sold into slavery to a Bedouin Sheik in Israel for 10 camels and a mule.

With her guidance, dozens of people who work with her privately and in courses, have consistently succeeded in doubling or tripling their income with PR (and sometimes even without!) by using sound bites effectively.

She also designs pre-publicity programs and strategies to prepare clients for media interviews. If they don't yet have a website, traffic, products or a platform she shows them how to get those too.

Personal Note

If you'd like to become a client I'd be delighted to know more about you.

Please let me know how I can help you here:

www.susanharrow.com/consultation