

How to Get Media Attention for Your Book

Contributed by Fern Reiss
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Book Marketing Secrets - Getting Media Attention

by Fern Reiss

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Tie in to the news.
The easiest way to get journalism attention for your book (or anything else, for that matter) is to tie your topic in to the news. A few years ago, I noticed a Voice of America journalist looking for sources for a story. My book, "Terrorism and Kids: Comforting Your Child," had been a small-press bestseller in the US, but I wondered if Voice of America might provide a new, overseas audience. Unfortunately, the journalist wasn't doing a piece on terrorism—his subject was the sudden popularity of home theatre systems. By tying in to current events, however, I was able to get my book on terrorism into his piece on home theatre systems, with this email: "You can thank Osama bin Laden for the sudden popularity of home theatre systems; Americans, post-9/11, are moving their entertainment into their homes; it's a 9/11 nesting response." That one liner netted me 15 minutes on Voice of America.

Even novels need news hooks. In fact, novels need news hooks more than nonfiction books. Nonfiction books have news hooks built in, by their nature. My book, "The Infertility Diet: Get Pregnant and Prevent Miscarriage" has dozens of automatic hooks because it's non-fiction. I can tie into anything in the news on infertility, miscarriage, pregnancy, etc. But even novels can have hooks: Consider putting something into your novel that ties into an interest, hobby, or pastime of yours, and then focus the media attention on that. If you're a knitter, put in a knitter; if you train golden retrievers, put in a dog. That way, you can tie in to those topics for your media appearances.

Be concise. The quickest route to the journalist's garbage pail is sending them a pitch that's just plain too long: Journalists have extremely limited time limits, and if they can't read your pitch easily, they won't. How long is too long? Keep your pitch to no more than five or six sentences. If you can't say it in under 100 words, you're not ready to pitch it.

Be considerate.

In addition to never sending lengthy pitches, follow the other rules of basic email consideration. Don't send attachments to a journalist---ever. And be sure that the subject line is informative.

(Something like: “Pitch—New Dietary Approach to Infertility” is perfect, because it both conveys that it’s a pitch, and gives the journalist enough information to make a quick decision on whether to continue reading.)

Suggest other sources. Most journalists won’t be able to justify devoting a whole story to just your book. So figure out how your

book is part of a larger trend or movement, and pitch a few other sources that the journalist can use as well. By presenting a ‘package’ like this to journalists, you’re much more likely to get coverage.

Don’t forget the local angle.

Even most of the big city dailies prefer a local angle on a national story. So if you’re pitching the Philadelphia Inquirer, don’t just talk about the national trend; give them the statistics on the national trend, and then share an anecdote or source that has a Philadelphia connection. You’re much more likely to get media attention if you always insert a ‘local’ hook.

Fern Reiss is CEO of PublishingGame.com, offering books, workshops, and consulting on how to get a literary agent, publish, and promote a book. She is also CEO of Expertizing.com, teaching people how to get more media attention for themselves and their business; in the past six months, she’s been quoted in over 100 publications from the NY Times to Wall Street Week.

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