"Julie is absolutely brilliant. Since hiring her, my public exposure has gone up 100x."
— Jeremy Schoemaker

PR ROCKSTAR



A Practical Guide to Media, Outreach & Relationships

JULIE SCOOPS
with JEREMY SCHOEMAKER

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Examples and message templates use placeholders so you can adapt them to your own work. Replace every bracketed field and verify every fact before sending a message. Sources are collected with the relevant chapters; organizational submission rules can change, so check the current instructions before pitching.

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Introduction — You Don’t Need Permission to Start

You have something worth sharing. Maybe you run a repair shop, organize a neighborhood event, teach a skill, build a product, or work on a cause that deserves attention. Then somebody suggests you should “get some PR,” as if there is a drawer marked PUBLICITY and you simply forgot to open it.

There is no drawer. There are people: reporters, hosts, producers, editors, organizers, partners, and audiences. They have different jobs and different reasons to care. Your task is to connect something useful to the right person at the right moment, then make the next step easy.

That is a skill you can practice. You do not need a famous surname, a giant press list, or a personality transplant. You need a story that matters to someone beyond you, a little research, and the willingness to make a clear approach.

This book is a field guide. Each medium gets its own chapter, and each chapter follows the same route: understand the opportunity, find the contact, do the homework, introduce yourself, pitch, respond, follow up, maintain the relationship, say thank you, and act. You can read straight through or begin with the channel that suits your story.

The examples are deliberately small enough to use. You will not find a magical subject line that makes every editor drop everything. You will find ways to make your pitch more relevant, your answers more useful, and your follow-through more dependable. That is less glamorous than a secret. It also survives contact with Tuesday morning.

Choose your starting chapter

Choose the audience benefit you can offer:

- **Chapter 1 — Podcasts:** an evergreen lesson or practical problem worth discussing.
- **Chapter 2 — Newspapers:** a verifiable change or public-interest question.
- **Chapter 3 — Television:** a useful demonstration or unfolding story viewers can see.
- **Chapter 4 — Radio:** a local news or service idea conveyed through sound.
- **Chapter 5 — Talk Radio:** an audience question you can discuss through follow-ups, callers, or disagreement.
- **Chapter 6 — Blogs:** a reader question suited to an article, interview, or review.
- **Chapter 7 — Public Events:** a contribution to a gathering's program or partnerships.
- **Chapter 8 — Community Events & Outreach:** useful help shaped by a community organization's stated needs.
- **Chapter 9 — Public Speaking:** one idea an audience can learn or practice in a talk or workshop.

Chapter 10 — Charm, Flirtation & Professional Boundaries applies to every route. Read it when personal attention and professional access might become tangled. The toolkit at the back brings the shared tools together, including a completed practice case.

Your starter kit

Before you send anything, assemble a short working folder. It can be a few documents and a simple spreadsheet.

- **Your one-sentence story:** who is affected, what is happening, and why it matters now.

- **Your useful contribution:** knowledge, evidence, access, a demonstration, an experience, or a practical solution you can credibly offer.
- **A short biography:** your name, role, relevant experience, and what you can speak about accurately.
- **A clear headshot and useful images:** files you have permission to share, with accurate captions and credits.
- **A fact sheet:** names, dates, locations, sources, and claims checked against evidence.
- **A contact record:** professional role, source of contact information, interests, approach, response, and next step.
- **A destination:** a functioning website or page where someone can learn more and contact you.

You can improve the folder as you go. Start with a useful version rather than spending three weeks choosing its shade of blue.

Turn an announcement into a story

"My business exists" matters enormously to you. Other people need a reason to care. Ask what changes for an audience: does your work solve a recurring problem, reveal a local change, teach something timely, or bring people together?

An announcement says, "We sell bicycle repairs." An audience-centered angle says, "Before the spring commute, here are the maintenance checks riders can do at home—and the signs they should visit a mechanic." The business still benefits, but the listener gets something worth listening to.

Use this planning sentence:

> For [specific audience], I can explain or show [useful thing], because [credible basis], at a time when [relevant reason].

Do not manufacture urgency. If there is no deadline, seasonal connection, new evidence, or current question, a thoughtful evergreen topic may suit a podcast or contributed article better than a daily news desk.

Set a goal you can recognize

Choose what useful attention should accomplish. A local organization may want volunteer inquiries. A specialist may want speaking invitations from the right industry. A workshop organizer may want relevant registrations. “Famous” is a mood, not a measurement plan.

Record the actions you take and the results you can observe: pitches sent to appropriate contacts, useful replies, interviews booked, accurate published pieces, relevant visits, inquiries, registrations, or introductions. Keep the period and definitions consistent when comparing results. Potential audience size is not the same as people who actually heard your message.

Give yourself a process goal as well. Researching a focused list and making a few good approaches are actions you control. Editorial decisions belong to other people. You can learn from those decisions without treating every unanswered email as a verdict on your worth.

Be easy to trust

Use your own identity and explain whom you represent. Make accurate claims. Disclose relevant commercial relationships. Keep your promises, correct mistakes, and ask permission before sharing somebody else’s private details or introduction.

Do not describe paid placement as independent coverage. Do not invent a customer quotation, inflate an audience, or claim an organization endorses you because somebody answered an email. If you do not know an answer, say you will check it—and actually check it.

The contact is doing a job. A newsroom may investigate the issue rather than tell your preferred story. An organizer may reject a talk because it does not suit the program. That does not make either person an obstacle to defeat. It gives you information about fit.

A note about persistence

Persistence earns its place when it brings something useful: a clearer angle, new evidence, better timing, or an answer to a real question. One brief reminder may be appropriate where permitted, even without new facts; it is optional. Use the toolkit's follow-up decision to plan when to send it and when to close the approach. Repeated requests do not improve the fit.

Respect explicit declines and submission rules. Treat a "not now" according to what was actually said. Silence is uncertain; it is not permission to hunt down someone's private accounts. Each chapter will help you choose a reasonable next step without turning follow-up into a second unpaid job for the recipient.

Finally, keep this sentence close: **you are offering something useful, not requesting that a stranger validate your existence.** It is easier to write, speak, and improve when those are different tasks.

Open your starter folder. Choose your first medium. Let's give someone a good reason to take your call.



Chapter 1 — Podcasts

1. Know the opportunity.

A podcast invitation is a chance to have a conversation worth overhearing. That distinction matters. Nobody downloads an episode hoping to spend forty minutes inside somebody else's sales brochure.

Bring a useful story, opinion, or lesson to an interested audience. A repair business might explain whether an appliance is worth fixing. A nonprofit might discuss how volunteers can help without creating extra work. A solo consultant might unpack a common mistake and show listeners how to avoid it.

Choose one result before you pitch: reach potential customers, meet partners, explain an issue, or establish a useful area of expertise. "Get famous" is a very demanding instruction for a microphone.

Example: A bicycle shop wants families to try commuting by bike. Its episode idea is "Your first school-run bike ride: three problems to solve before Monday." That gives the host a conversation and the listener a reason to press play.

2. Find the right contact.

Start with your subject and the audience you want to reach. Search podcast directories and the web for phrases those people use. Inspect recent episodes before adding a show to your list.

Visit the show's own website. Look for guest submissions, a booking form, a producer credit, or a publicly listed business address. A host may choose guests; a producer or booking coordinator may manage the process. Follow the route the show supplies.

Build a small contact sheet with these fields:

- Show, website, audience, and relevant episode.

- Contact name, role, and official submission route.
- Proposed topic and why it fits.
- Date approached, response, and agreed next step.

Begin with five strong matches. A small show reaching exactly the right people can be more useful than a huge show whose audience has no reason to care. Don't judge fit by a host's follower count alone, and don't guess a personal email when a professional submission route exists.

3. Do your homework.

Listen to a recent episode all the way through and sample another relevant one. Notice how the host opens, how detailed answers get, whether guests tell stories or teach steps, and how the show handles promotion.

Write a one-sentence answer to each question: Who listens? What do they struggle with? What can I explain? Why am I qualified to explain it? What would make this conversation different from the show's recent episodes?

If the topic was just covered, find a useful follow-on rather than pretending you discovered it. A recent episode about starting a business might create room for one about handling the first unhappy customer.

Prepare a short biography, a clear headshot, three proposed questions, and one public page with relevant background. Keep materials easy to open. You are preparing an invitation, not assigning the producer a scavenger hunt.

Check whether the show uses video. For audio alone, explain an example without pointing to a picture the listener cannot see. Keep lists short, describe the important action, and let the host ask questions rather than delivering a spoken instruction manual.

Checkpoint: if you cannot describe what the listener gets in one sentence, keep working on the idea before working on the pitch.

4. Make the introduction.

A warm introduction helps when the person making it actually knows both parties. Ask permission: “Would you be comfortable introducing me? Here is a short note you can forward.” Give them an easy way to decline.

Cold introductions can work because the idea fits. Reference something specific and explain why it creates a natural connection. Skip elaborate compliments. “Your episode on first-time volunteers raised a question I can help answer” does more work than “I am a huge fan of your incredible content.”

Template 1 — First approach

> Subject: Episode idea: [specific listener problem]
>
> Hi [name],
>
> In your episode about [topic], [specific point] stood out. I work on [relevant work], and I could help your listeners understand [specific problem].
>
> A possible conversation: [clear episode idea]. We could cover [point one], [point two], and [point three].
>
> My relevant background is [brief, accurate qualification]. Here is [one useful link]. Would this fit a future episode?
>
> [Name and professional contact details]

5. Make the pitch.

The introduction creates relevance; the pitch makes the conversation easy to imagine. Offer a topic with enough substance for questions, examples, disagreement, and practical advice.

Weak: "I own a bicycle shop and would love to come on and tell everyone about our products."

Better: "I can walk parents through planning their first school commute by bike, including a route check, a practice ride, and what to do when the weather changes. I can also explain which purchases can wait."

The second pitch still benefits the business. It earns that benefit by helping the audience first.

Check every proposed claim. If you mention a result, know what was measured and over what period. If a story involves a customer, obtain permission or choose an example you can discuss without identifying them. Never promise someone else's participation before they agree.

Send one strong idea. A short alternative is fine when genuinely useful. Fifteen unrelated topics make the producer do the positioning you should have done.

6. Handle the response.

When the answer is yes, switch from persuasion to dependable coordination. Confirm the format, recording method, date, time zone, likely length, topic, and any preparation the host wants. Ask whether it is live or recorded and how the show handles promotional links.

For a journalistic podcast, use the interview-ground-rules guidance in Chapter 2 before sharing anything sensitive. Recording arrangements alone do not tell you what can be published or attributed.

Template 2 — Response to interest

> Thanks, [name]. I'd be glad to discuss [agreed topic]. I can offer [two scheduling options, including time zone].
>
> Could you confirm the recording format, expected length, and anything you would like me to prepare? Here are my short bio, headshot, and [relevant background link].
>
> I will focus on [listener benefit]. Please tell me if you want a different emphasis.

For a redirect, thank the person and use the recommended route without implying an endorsement. For "not now," ask whether a particular future development would make a new approach useful. For a firm no, acknowledge it and stop pursuing that proposal.

Before recording, test your microphone and connection, quiet the room, silence notifications, and have water nearby. Keep notes to brief prompts. Reading a paragraph aloud can sound like a paragraph trying to escape.

7. Follow up with purpose.

Use the show's published guidance when it exists. For an ordinary unanswered guest pitch with no response window, use **The follow-up decision in Your PR Toolkit** to set an optional reminder and closure date. A seasonal episode or recording schedule may need an earlier decision; state the real deadline in your first pitch and respect the producer's instructions.

Template 3 — Useful follow-up

> Hi [name], a brief follow-up on [episode idea]. Since my first note, [genuine new detail or useful resource]. It could help listeners [specific benefit].
>
> If the topic fits, I'm happy to send a short outline. If it isn't a match, no problem—I will leave it here.

A new detail strengthens a follow-up, but one brief reminder or fit-check can still be appropriate without it where the show's rules permit. Don't manufacture news. When your follow-up plan reaches its closure point, close the loop in your tracker and move on. A genuinely different future idea can earn a new approach.

Persistence means improving your fit and finding other suitable shows. Put your next effort into another conversation you could help make useful.

8. Keep the relationship warm.

After recording, provide anything you promised promptly. Send correct names, source links, and pronunciation notes while the producer still has time to use them. Ask how to flag a factual mistake; don't assume you receive editorial approval.

When the episode appears, share the official link with a specific description of why people should listen. Quote accurately and follow the show's rules before republishing its audio or video. A link is simpler than assuming permission to cut a promotional trailer.

Keep a record of what interested the host. Later, send a relevant development or introduce a suitable expert with permission. You do not need to ask for another appearance every time you say hello.

Track useful outcomes: relevant inquiries, conversations, subscribers, or partnership leads. A thoughtful message from the right listener can matter more than a large but unexplained download number.

9. Say thank you appropriately.

A good thank-you names what you appreciated, finishes your obligations, and leaves the door open without placing your foot in it.

Template 4 — Thank-you

> Hi [name], thank you for the conversation about [topic]. Your question on [specific point] made the discussion especially useful.
>
> Here is the [resource] I promised. When the episode is published, please send the official link and any sharing guidance. I would be happy to point people to it.
>
> Thanks again for your time and preparation.

Don't make a gift the price of gratitude. A thoughtful note and reliable follow-through are usually sufficient. If you consider sending anything with monetary value, check the recipient's policy first and avoid anything that could create an expectation about coverage.

10. Put it to work.

Five takeaways

1. Choose a listener problem before choosing a show.
2. Use the show's professional booking route.
3. Pitch a conversation with practical value.
4. Make scheduling and preparation easy after a yes.
5. Build the relationship by being useful after the recording.

Your checklist

- ☐ Five shows genuinely fit my audience and topic.
- ☐ I listened before contacting anyone.

- ☐ My pitch has one clear idea and accurate qualifications.
- ☐ My recording setup and background materials are ready.
- ☐ My tracker includes follow-up and promised resources.

Do this now: Choose one show, listen to an episode, and write a pitch that names the listener's problem and three things you can help them do. Don't send until you can explain why this particular show should care.

Sources and further reading: ASHA's podcast proposal guide and production process; URMIA's podcast submission guidance. Checked November 23, 2026. These organizations illustrate specific submission and format choices; follow each show's own current instructions.



Chapter 2 — Newspapers

1. Know the opportunity.

Newspaper coverage starts with a question: why would this matter to the people who read this publication? “Because I would enjoy being in the newspaper” is honest, but it needs a little development.

A newspaper may publish online, in print, or both. The useful distinction is the reporting: a journalist gathers information, checks it, and decides how to tell the story. You can offer access, evidence, and expertise. You cannot buy editorial approval with a beautifully organized press folder.

Find a real public interest: a local change, a practical problem, a timely event, or a development that affects people’s decisions. A new business can be interesting, but “we opened” becomes stronger when the opening fills a specific gap readers already feel.

Example: A neighborhood tool library is starting evening hours. The story might be about residents who cannot use daytime services, how volunteers will staff the change, and whether the model can last. The reporter gets questions to investigate, not merely a ribbon to photograph.

2. Find the right contact.

Identify the reporter’s beat: the subject or community they cover. Business, education, neighborhoods, housing, food, and local government are different assignments. Read the publication’s staff page and the bylines on recent relevant stories.

Use contact information on the publication’s website, the reporter’s professional profile, or an official tips form. For a community calendar item, use the calendar process. For a letter to the editor or opinion submission, follow that section’s rules. Sending everything to the editor in chief is rarely the shortest route.

Record the reporter's name, beat, recent relevant article, public contact route, publication, and date verified. Add a separate field for your proposed angle. That forces you to match person and story before sending.

Don't contact five reporters at the same newspaper with an identical message and hope one claims you. Pick the best fit; if the assignment is unclear, ask the appropriate desk which route to use.

3. Do your homework.

Read several recent stories, including ones that don't mention businesses like yours. Learn the reporter's questions, geography, level of detail, and approach to competing viewpoints.

Then prepare a fact sheet. Include the basic who, what, where, when, why, and how, plus the source behind each important assertion. Separate confirmed information from estimates and plans. A promised opening date and an opening that has happened are different facts.

For the tool library, useful materials include the public schedule, explanation of the membership rules, permission to visit, a named spokesperson, and participants who have independently agreed to speak. Let a reporter interview those participants without coaching their answers.

Know your limitations. If you don't have records supporting a claimed increase, say so. "We are collecting that information" is more useful than a number you found floating around a group chat.

Checkpoint: make it easy for a skeptical reader to check the part of the story that matters most. Credibility is more useful than a larger adjective.

4. Make the introduction.

A warm introduction should explain why the connection makes sense. Ask a mutual contact whether they are comfortable forwarding a short, relevant note; don't put their name in a subject line without permission.

For a cold approach, connect your information to the reporter's actual work. Mention one specific article or beat and get to the proposed story quickly. You do not need a paragraph explaining that newspapers are important.

Template 1 — First approach

> Subject: [Local development] and its effect on [community]
>
> Hi [name],
>
> You recently covered [relevant topic]. On [date], [organization] will [specific development], affecting [people or issue].
>
> The useful question is [public-interest question]. We can provide [document or verifiable information], access to [place or activity], and [available spokesperson].
>
> Would this fit your reporting? A short fact sheet is here: [public link]. I can help coordinate access before [real deadline, if any].
>
> [Name and professional contact details]

5. Make the pitch.

Lead with the news, not the life story of your organization. Explain what changed, why now, who is affected, and what you can provide to help the reporter examine it.

Weak: "Our amazing nonprofit is transforming lives with an exciting new initiative. We would love a feature."

Better: "Starting next month, the neighborhood tool library plans to open two evenings a week. We can share the schedule and staffing plan, introduce residents who requested evening access, and arrange a visit during a trial session."

The better version has fewer fireworks and more reporting material. Reporters can investigate it. Readers can decide whether it matters.

Avoid implying exclusivity unless you mean it. If you offer a reporter the first chance to pursue a story, agree on what that means and for how long. Likewise, don't assume that writing "embargoed" on an email creates an agreement about publication timing. Establish the arrangement before sharing information that depends on it.

Keep your initial message focused. A useful public link beats a giant attachment that arrives before anyone asks for it.

6. Handle the response.

Interest often arrives as a deadline. Reply promptly, even if your first answer is a clear estimate of when you can deliver the requested information.

Template 2 — Response to interest

> Thanks, [name]. I can provide [requested material] by [time and time zone]. [Spokesperson] is available [options], and a visit is possible [options].
>
> Could you confirm your deadline and the questions you need us to address? [Specific figure or statement] is still being checked; I will mark it clearly rather than treat it as confirmed.
>
> My best contact for coordination is [professional contact route].

Before an interview: agree what can be used

For planning, assume information you give a journalist can be published and attributed to you by name unless you both explicitly agree to different terms **before** you share it. Apply that precaution to preparation calls and emails as well as the main interview. A casual tone does not make a conversation private.

AP's published principles define **on the record** as usable information attributed by name; **off the record** as information not available for publication; and **background** as publishable information under negotiated conditions, often with a role description instead of a name. Other people may understand those labels differently. Ask exactly what can be used and how you will be identified, then wait for an explicit agreement.

You can say: "Before I share this, can we agree whether you may publish the information and how you would attribute it? Here are the limits I am requesting." If there is no agreement, do not disclose information you are not prepared to see published. Adding "off the record" afterward does not itself change terms already in place.

Live or recorded describes the production format; it does not establish confidentiality or permission to publish. A recorded interview can still be on the record. Agreeing ground rules also does not give you a right to approve the finished article or demand that material be removed.

Answer the question that was asked. If you need to check, say when you'll return with an answer and do it. If the reporter requests another viewpoint, help where you can without screening people for whether they'll praise you.

A redirect means use the proper desk. "Not now" may mean timing or a missing development; ask once what would change the fit. A firm decline means close this proposal respectfully. Silence is neither a yes nor permission to phone every extension in the newsroom.

7. Follow up with purpose.

Routine pitches and imminent events need different timing. Put an actual event date in the first message and follow any published submission guidance. For a nonurgent story with no response window, use **The follow-up decision in Your PR Toolkit**. If a real reporting or event deadline has passed, close or revise the proposal rather than send a routine reminder for an expired story.

Template 3 — Useful follow-up

> Hi [name], one follow-up on [story idea]. [New document, confirmed access, or meaningful development] is now available here: [link].
>
> It adds [specific relevance] to the question of [issue]. If this is useful, I can help with [next step]. Otherwise, I will leave this proposal here.

A new fact makes a stronger follow-up than "Did you see my email?" Where permitted, one concise reminder or fit-check can also work without new facts. When your follow-up plan reaches its closure point without a reply, move on. Try a different suitable publication, refine the angle, or wait for an actual development.

If the story concerns urgent public safety, use the appropriate official reporting channels as well as any newsroom tip route. A publicity pitch is not an emergency response system.

8. Keep the relationship warm.

Be the person who sends the correct document, spells the name properly, and answers before the deadline. Glamour has its moments. So does a clearly labeled spreadsheet.

Offer relevant expertise between pitches. You might direct a reporter to a public report or, with permission, introduce someone who knows an issue better than you do. You don't have to be the quoted

source to be helpful.

When a story appears, read it carefully. Distinguish a factual mistake from a sentence you wish sounded more flattering. For a factual correction, send the specific statement, the correct information, and evidence through the publication's correction process. You may ask to check facts before publication; don't assume a right to approve the article.

Share the official link. If you want to reproduce an article, photograph, or substantial excerpt in marketing materials, obtain the necessary permission rather than assuming coverage transfers ownership.

9. Say thank you appropriately.

Thank the reporter for their work, not for delivering a favorable verdict. A journalist can report fairly without writing the story you had imagined.

Template 4 — Thank-you

> Hi [name], thank you for taking the time to examine [issue]. I appreciated the care you took with [specific part of the reporting].
>
> The official story link has been shared with [relevant audience, if true]. I am available if a factual follow-up or additional document would be useful.
>
> Thank you again for your time.

Skip expensive gifts, favors, or anything contingent on the tone of the coverage. If a recipient's policy is unclear, a brief note is enough. Keep a later story proposal in a separate message so the thanks can stand on its own.

If a member of the public helped with interviews or access, thank them too. Respect the fact that sharing a personal experience can take effort even when your own role was mostly arranging a call.

10. Put it to work.

Five takeaways

1. Match a real public-interest story to the correct beat.
2. Use the publication's professional contact and submission routes.
3. Offer facts, evidence, people, and access.
4. Treat deadlines and uncertainty honestly.
5. Build trust without demanding editorial control.

Your checklist

- ☐ My angle explains what changed and who is affected.
- ☐ The reporter covers this subject and geography.
- ☐ Important facts have identifiable sources.
- ☐ Spokespeople and participants agreed to be available.
- ☐ Follow-up, corrections, and sharing have a clear process.

Do this now: Find one recent local article related to your work. Identify the reporter's beat and draft three sentences explaining a new, verifiable development their readers might find useful. Leave every adjective out of the first version. You can survive without "groundbreaking."

Sources and further reading: Guardian contact routes; AP contact options; AP's News Values and Principles, including its interview-ground-rules definitions. Checked November 23, 2026. Submission routes differ by publication; the templates and examples here are adaptable writing advice.



Chapter 3 — Television

1. Know the opportunity.

Television needs something viewers can see. You may have a fascinating idea, but "a person sitting in a chair saying fascinating things" puts a lot of pressure on the chair.

Start with a visual action: a repair, rehearsal, demonstration, event, process, or change happening in a real place. Then connect that action to a useful story. A florist can demonstrate keeping an arrangement fresh. A nonprofit can show how a community distribution works. A solo organizer can demonstrate a practical way to sort a crowded entryway.

Distinguish a reported news story from a lifestyle interview or demonstration. A reporter may investigate an issue and seek several viewpoints. A lifestyle producer may need a concise segment that helps viewers do something. Paid sponsorship is another arrangement entirely; ask which you are discussing.

Example: A repair café offers a visual segment on three checks people can make before discarding a broken household item. Any demonstration must be safe, accurate, and appropriate for viewers. Good television is not a reason to improvise with electricity.

2. Find the right contact.

Watch the programs you want to approach. Then use the station's official website to find newsroom contacts, story-tip forms, segment submissions, or a public producer address.

For a breaking or scheduled local story, an assignment desk may help route the information. For a planned lifestyle segment, seek the relevant producer or booking process. A reporter who covers your subject may be appropriate for a developed news story. The person on camera is not automatically the person who books every guest.

Record the program, audience, segment type, contact role, professional submission route, and a recent relevant segment. Note whether the appearance would be live, recorded, in studio, remote, or at your location if that information is public.

Check that the station serves your area and the program actually includes the kind of appearance you propose. Pitching a demonstration to a program that never runs one creates extra work for everyone.

3. Do your homework.

Watch complete segments rather than promotional clips alone. Notice how quickly the host introduces guests, how demonstrations are framed, what gets shown close up, and how much information fits comfortably.

Prepare a simple visual inventory:

- The action viewers will see and the lesson it teaches.
- A suitable location and any access restrictions.
- The spokesperson and other people who have agreed to participate.
- Props, samples, or before-and-after examples.
- Clear source information for claims and practical instructions.

Know who can authorize filming at the location. Ask before promising access to customers, volunteers, children, private premises, or an organization's operations. Tell the producer about noise, space, parking, or setup constraints that may affect the shoot.

For a remote appearance, check your camera framing, light, sound, and connection. Look at the background before the producer does. Your laundry deserves privacy even when your business does not.

Checkpoint: describe the segment in pictures first. If the demonstration disappeared, would there still be a clear, useful idea?

4. Make the introduction.

A mutual contact can introduce you if they genuinely know the producer and understand the fit. Give them a short forwardable note, a visual example, and an easy way to say no.

In a cold approach, lead with the segment. Mention a specific program feature or recent topic only when it explains relevance. “We could show your viewers how to…” is usually more helpful than a long opening about your enthusiasm for television.

Template 1 — First approach

> Subject: Visual segment idea: [useful viewer outcome]
>
> Hi [name],
>
> For [program or segment], we could demonstrate [specific action] and help viewers [practical result].
>
> Viewers would see [visual one], [visual two], and [visual three]. [Spokesperson] can explain the steps clearly, and we can provide [props or authorized location].
>
> Here is a short visual example: [public link]. Would this fit an upcoming segment? We can adapt the demonstration to your format.
>
> [Name and professional contact details]

5. Make the pitch.

Answer four questions: what is the story, why now, what will viewers see, and how can the station make it happen?

Weak: “Our repair café is wonderful, and we’d love to come on television to tell everyone about our mission.”

Better: "Ahead of this weekend's repair event, a volunteer can demonstrate three non-electrical checks for a wobbly chair. We can bring examples showing the problem and the finished repair, explain which jobs need a professional, and share the event's public details."

The second pitch offers action, a useful lesson, a reason for the timing, and a manageable setup. It also leaves room for the producer to change the angle.

Prepare each step in a visible sequence. If a process takes too long, show its stages using separate samples and explain that clearly. Don't fake a result, conceal important preparation, or imply the segment demonstrates a complete process when it shows only part of one.

6. Handle the response.

Once a producer is interested, find out exactly what the appearance requires. Confirm date, time zone, arrival or connection time, format, expected length, topic, and who will speak. Ask about props, clothing considerations, setup, and links or details the program needs in advance. For a reported interview, read Chapter 2's interview-ground-rules guidance before discussing sensitive information; a recorded segment can still be on the record.

Template 2 — Response to interest

> Thanks, [name]. We can provide [agreed demonstration] with [spokesperson and props]. Our available options are [times, including time zone].
>
> Could you confirm whether the segment is live or recorded, the expected length, arrival or connection time, and any setup requirements?
>
> Here are the correct name, title, pronunciation, and [public information link]. Please let me know which details you need before the appearance.

If asked for information you don't have, provide a realistic return time. If the topic changes beyond your knowledge, say what you can cover and suggest another suitable expert.

A redirect means use the right production route. "Not now" may mean the program's calendar has moved; ask whether a future event would be relevant. A clear no deserves a brief acknowledgment. A slow answer does not mean you should contact the host's personal account.

7. Follow up with purpose.

Provide meaningful lead time for planned events and demonstrations, and include the real event date in the first pitch. Follow the program's published process. For a nonurgent proposal with no response window, use **The follow-up decision in Your PR Toolkit**; an approaching shoot or event deadline may instead require a different outlet or a revised angle.

Template 3 — Useful follow-up

> Hi [name], one follow-up on [segment idea]. We now have [confirmed visual, access, or timely development], which would let viewers see [specific result].
>
> The relevant date is [date], and [spokesperson] remains available [options]. Here is [short visual link]. If it doesn't fit your schedule, I will leave it here.

Don't call the assignment desk repeatedly about an ordinary demonstration pitch. One concise reminder or fit-check is optional where permitted, even without a new visual. When your follow-up plan reaches its closure point without a reply, close that attempt and work on another suitable outlet or a stronger future angle.

Even a confirmed segment may be displaced by breaking news. Stay flexible. Ask whether the producer wants to reschedule, then respect the answer. Being gracious about a cancellation is part of being easy to book again.

8. Keep the relationship warm.

Make the appearance easy to produce. Bring organized props, arrive as agreed, and keep contact details available. During the segment, look where the production team directs, listen to the host, and answer before adding your extra point.

Use short, complete answers. When a question is outside your knowledge, say so. If time is running out, finish the useful step instead of racing through every prepared detail. Viewers should leave knowing one thing they can do well.

Afterward, send any source or resource you promised. Flag a factual mistake promptly through the program's process. Don't demand that a harmless awkward pause be treated as a factual correction.

Share the station's official link when available. Ask about permission before downloading, editing, or reposting its footage. Later, approach the producer with a genuinely new visual idea or offer relevant help without making every message a booking request.

9. Say thank you appropriately.

Thank the people who prepared the appearance, not only the person viewers saw. A producer coordinating details deserves more than a wave toward the studio door.

Template 4 — Thank-you

> Hi [name], thank you for coordinating today's segment on [topic]. I appreciated the team's help with [specific production detail].
>
> Here is [promised resource or verified detail]. Please send the official segment link and any sharing guidance when available; I would be glad to direct people to it.
>
> Thanks again to you and the team.

Send an accurate resource, not an unexpected sales attachment. Avoid valuable gifts or favors tied to coverage. If you are considering a small token, check the station's policy; a thoughtful note is usually simpler.

Thank anyone who let you use their location or agreed to participate. Confirm that borrowed props return to their owners. Finishing those practical tasks makes it easier for everyone to work together again.

10. Put it to work.

Five takeaways

1. Start with a useful action viewers can see.
2. Match the pitch to the program and production role.
3. Offer realistic visuals, access, and accurate instructions.
4. Prepare for the actual format and stay flexible.
5. Be dependable before, during, and after the appearance.

Your checklist

- ☐ My idea fits a real program and viewer need.
- ☐ I can describe three clear visuals.
- ☐ People, locations, and props are available with permission.

- ☐ Claims, demonstrations, and practical limits are accurate.
- ☐ Logistics, promised resources, and sharing permission are tracked.

Do this now: Use your phone to record a rough demonstration of one useful idea. Watch it without sound. Can you tell what is happening? Then listen without watching. Is the explanation clear? Refine both before sending a producer the link.

Sources and further reading: NBCU Academy on purposeful live shots; ABC7 Los Angeles submission and image-permission guidance; ABC7 New York story-submission routes. Checked November 23, 2026. Station procedures are examples; confirm the current requirements with the producer handling your appearance.



Chapter 4 — Radio

1. Know the opportunity

Radio is a wonderful test of whether your story actually makes sense. You cannot point at a slide, enlarge a chart, or hope an impressive jacket explains the business model. You get words, sound, and somebody's attention. Make all three work.

This chapter focuses on radio news, features, service interviews, and community programming. Talk radio gets its own chapter because a live discussion with callers is a different assignment from giving a reporter a concise recorded explanation.

A good radio opportunity might be a local news quotation, a useful seasonal interview, or a short community announcement. Decide which one you want before approaching a station. A community calendar submission needs accurate event details. A news interview needs a story. Neither becomes more compelling because you paste your entire biography underneath it.

2. Find the right contact

Start with the station's own website. Read its news, programming, contact, and community pages. Look for a published news desk address, a reporter covering your subject, a feature producer, or the station's designated event submission form.

Follow the route provided. If the station asks for announcements through a form, use the form. If a reporter publishes a professional contact address alongside a relevant story, record the page where you found it. Use a verified professional route so your message reaches the right desk.

Build a contact sheet with the station, program or segment, relevant person or desk, public contact method, recent related coverage, and your reason for choosing it. Add the date you checked the

information. Do not substitute the advertising department for the newsroom because its phone number was easier to find.

For a real example, WBUR separates newsroom contacts from corporate sponsorship and general programming inquiries. WPR distinguishes audience services from participation in particular programs. Read the labels before choosing the route.

3. Do your homework

Listen before you pitch. Hear a recent segment all the way through. Notice how quickly the presenter introduces a subject, how long guests speak, and whether the program favors local stories, practical explanations, or detailed reporting.

Then answer three questions: Why these listeners? Why this subject? Why now?

Prepare an audio version of your story. Replace “as you can see here” with a spoken description. Translate an unfamiliar abbreviation. Practice names and numbers out loud. Have the original source available for any factual claim.

Example scenario: a neighborhood repair business wants to explain how residents can prepare equipment before a cold spell. The service angle is a short preparation checklist. Build the angle around a listener’s practical question, such as what to check before starting equipment that has been stored all summer.

4. Make the introduction

A warm introduction can help if the person connecting you actually knows the newsroom. Ask for permission first: “Would you be comfortable introducing me to the producer who handles practical home features? I can send you three sentences to forward.” Give them an easy way to decline.

For a cold approach, explain the listener benefit immediately. Use the published professional channel and a specific subject line.

Template: first approach

> Subject: Local service idea: [useful question] before [timely event]
>
> Hi [name],
>
> Your recent [segment] explained [specific subject] clearly. I can offer a short local interview on [listener problem], including [two useful points].
>
> [Spokesperson] can speak from [accurate, relevant qualification] and is available [honest availability]. Would this fit your upcoming coverage?
>
> [Name and professional contact details]

Send a short introduction, then let the producer decide whether to request the encyclopedia.

5. Make the pitch

Pitch an answer the audience needs. A useful pitch identifies the issue, its timing, a suitable voice, and what the station can actually record. If sound is available, describe it accurately and make clear what access you can arrange.

Weak pitch: "Our company is an industry leader and would love exposure on your station. We can discuss all our services."

Better pitch: "Before the first cold weekend, your listeners may be wondering whether their stored equipment is ready to use. A local repair technician can explain three simple checks, the warning signs that need professional attention, and common mistakes to avoid. We can arrange a quiet interview or access to the workshop if useful."

The better version gives the journalist a job worth doing. It offers useful access without pretending the workshop will automatically make a great recording.

Prepare a short supporting note with the verified facts, the spokesperson's qualifications, pronunciation guidance, and a reliable callback number. Link to the relevant material in a clearly labeled document the producer can open without requesting access.

6. Handle the response

An interested reply is the beginning of preparation. Ask whether the interview is live or recorded, the likely length, the subject focus, the connection method, and the deadline. Confirm the time zone in writing. Put the appointment in your calendar immediately. Before sharing sensitive information in a reported interview, use Chapter 2's interview-ground-rules guidance. Live or recorded describes the format, not what may be published or attributed.

Template: response to interest

> Thanks, [name]. [Spokesperson] is available at [date, time, time zone]. Could you confirm whether this is live or recorded, the connection details, and the main questions you want to explore?
>
> The verified background is [link]. The best callback number is [number]. Please let me know your deadline for any additional material.

If the producer asks a question you cannot substantiate, say you will check. If redirected, thank the person and approach the suggested desk through its public channel. Silence is an unknown, not a booking. "Not now" invites a question about future relevance; a firm decline closes this pitch. Respect a request for no further contact.

Before recording, silence notifications, find a quiet room, and test the requested connection. Ask before adding another participant. Bring answers, not a speech.

7. Follow up with purpose

Follow-up should make the producer's decision easier. Match the urgency to the story and the outlet's instructions. A breaking deadline and a feature for next month need different handling. For an ordinary nonurgent pitch with no response window, use **The follow-up decision in Your PR Toolkit**; a time-sensitive news item needs a usable current angle before another approach.

Template: useful follow-up

> Hi [name], a useful update on the [subject] idea: [new verified detail or confirmed access]. That means we can now offer [specific listener benefit].
>
> If this fits your coverage, [spokesperson] is available [availability]. If another desk handles it, I would appreciate the correct public submission route.

Fresh information is helpful, but one brief reminder or fit-check is optional where permitted even without new facts. When your follow-up plan reaches its closure point without a reply, park the pitch. For "not now," ask whether the producer would welcome a later update tied to a particular event. Record that permission rather than inventing it.

8. Keep the relationship warm

The easiest source to book again is often the person who made the last booking easy. Be reachable when promised. Supply accurate pronunciation and useful background. If a fact changes, tell the producer promptly instead of hoping the microphone forgets.

After an appearance, ask for a public link if one is available. Share that link with accurate context and credit the station. Ask about permissions before republishing a recording elsewhere; a link and a copied audio file are different things.

Keep notes about the producer's preferred subjects and contact route. Send a future update when you have something relevant. "Thinking of you, here is another sales brochure" is still a sales brochure.

9. Say thank you appropriately

A useful thank-you recognizes the work and closes outstanding tasks. Send any promised source, correction, or additional contact. An appreciation note should not quietly turn into a demand for a second interview.

Template: thank-you

> Thank you for the [subject] interview, [name]. I appreciated the chance to explain [specific useful point].
>
> Here is the [resource] I promised: [link]. If a factual clarification would help, you can reach me at [professional contact]. I will share the public segment link with credit to [station].

Skip gifts intended to influence coverage. A newsroom may have policies governing gifts and hospitality; respect those policies. If the station organizes a public community activity, participating appropriately can be useful. It does not buy an editorial favor.

10. Put it to work

Five takeaways

1. Choose a news, feature, service, or community opportunity before selecting a contact.
2. Use the station's published route and verify the person's role.
3. Explain the listener's benefit in words that work without a screen.

4. Confirm the interview format, deadline, connection, and time zone.
5. Earn future trust through accuracy and reliable follow-through.

Before you send

- ☐ I listened to a relevant segment.
- ☐ My pitch answers "why these listeners, why this, why now?"
- ☐ My spokesperson can explain the subject clearly out loud.
- ☐ Facts, availability, and callback details are checked.
- ☐ My next follow-up has a reason beyond wanting attention.

Do this now: choose one station and one practical listener question. Find its public submission route, then record yourself answering the question in thirty seconds. Listen back. Remove the throat-clearing and the jargon. You have just started your interview preparation.

Sources

Checked November 23, 2026:

- WBUR: Contact WBUR.
- Wisconsin Public Radio: Contact Us.



Chapter 5 — Talk Radio

1. Know the opportunity

Talk radio is a conversation with a steering wheel you do not control. You may arrive with three beautiful talking points and meet a host who wants to discuss point four, a skeptical caller, and a hard stop for the next segment. Prepare for the conversation you are joining.

Look for a subject where you can contribute a useful explanation, an informed perspective, or practical answers. A lively discussion does not require you to manufacture a fight. It does require enough substance to answer a question after the promotional introduction is over.

This chapter focuses on interviews and discussions that may involve live callers, disagreement, or follow-up questions. Some programs also record interviews. Confirm the actual format rather than assuming a microphone means you are live.

2. Find the right contact

Begin with the program page on the station's official website. Look for the host, producer, booking contact, or published guest submission process. The producer may arrange guests and logistics while the host conducts the conversation. Direct the proposal to the person responsible for booking.

Read the show's contact instructions. A caller line may exist for participating in a current discussion, not for booking yourself into next Thursday's program. Do not turn a live line into your personal switchboard.

WOSU's All Sides page, for example, identifies its call-in route as a place for questions and comments. That is participation information; do not assume it is a guest-booking invitation.

Record the program, station, host, producer if listed, published contact route, usual subject areas, and recent episodes relevant to your idea. Keep the public source link. If the show gives no individual contact, use its general professional channel and ask who handles guest suggestions. Do not invent an email address from the host's name.

3. Do your homework

Listen to complete discussions. An isolated clip can tell you the host is funny; it may not tell you how the host treats disagreement, how often callers participate, or how quickly interviews move.

Notice whether guests explain, debate, advise, or tell personal stories. Learn what the audience already knows. Your pitch should fit the program you heard, not the gentler imaginary version you would prefer to visit.

Prepare a one-page conversation sheet: your central point, three supporting facts with sources, a clear example, two likely objections, and the limits of your knowledge. Practice answering those objections directly.

Read the listener guidance, too. All Sides explains that some programs do not take calls and asks callers to prepare a brief summary for a screener. That tells you something useful about the conversation before you ever join it.

Example scenario: a small-business owner wants to discuss whether downtown events help nearby shops. The owner can describe documented business observations and practical planning questions. That does not qualify them to speak for every merchant, the city budget, and the entire future of civilization.

4. Make the introduction

A warm introduction works best when it explains the fit. Ask your contact whether they would be comfortable forwarding a short idea to the producer. Give them a description of the discussion you can contribute, not a demand to cash in a friendship.

For a cold introduction, show that you understand the program's conversation.

Template: first approach

> Subject: Guest idea for [show]: [specific audience question]
>
> Hi [producer or host],
>
> Your discussion of [recent subject] raised the question of [relevant follow-on issue]. [Spokesperson] can discuss [specific contribution], including [example] and [useful counterpoint].
>
> Their relevant experience is [accurate qualification]. Would this fit a future conversation? They are available [availability] and comfortable with [only the formats genuinely agreed].
>
> [Name and professional contact]

Never volunteer somebody for a combative live debate without asking them first. Surprise is a party theme, not a guest preparation strategy.

5. Make the pitch

Give the host a question worth asking. Explain what you can contribute and what listeners will understand or be able to do afterward. A good discussion topic has room for questions; it is not a press release with the paragraphs rearranged.

Weak pitch: "Please interview our founder about our exciting event services. We would love to promote our upcoming projects."

Better pitch: "When a downtown event brings crowds, which local businesses actually benefit? A local shop owner can discuss how timing, street access, and communication with organizers affect a trading day. They can share their documented observations, explain what those observations cannot prove, and suggest questions merchants should ask before the next event."

The second pitch offers a discussion, a perspective, and limits. It does not promise that the guest will win an argument.

Offer a small number of suggested questions if helpful. Include questions that invite a real answer, such as "What would make you change your mind?" Practicing that question can expose a gap in your evidence before a caller does.

6. Handle the response

If the producer is interested, clarify whether the appearance is live or recorded, its duration, whether callers or other guests are involved, and the intended topic. Ask for the technical instructions and confirm the time zone. Use Chapter 2's interview-ground-rules guidance before sharing sensitive material with a journalist or producer. A recorded discussion can still be on the record; clarify any special terms before disclosing information that depends on them.

Template: response to interest

> Thanks, [name]. [Spokesperson] can join on [date, time, time zone]. Could you confirm the interview length, live or recorded format, and whether callers or other guests will participate?
>
> Their contribution will focus on [scope]. The supporting material is [link]. Please send the connection and callback details, and let me know if the topic changes.

Answer an actual question before adding your message. If a caller raises a fair concern, acknowledge it. If you do not know something, say so. For a false premise: “That is not what the information shows. The part we can establish is [fact].”

A redirect is an opportunity to contact the appropriate producer. Silence is no booking. Ask what future timing would make “not now” useful; honor a firm decline.

7. Follow up with purpose

A relevant new event, verified update, or better-defined question strengthens a talk-radio follow-up. For an ordinary unanswered proposal with no response window, use **The follow-up decision in Your PR Toolkit**. One concise reminder or fit-check is optional where permitted even without a new development; if the discussion has lost its timely hook, revise it or close the pitch.

Template: useful follow-up

> Hi [name], one development on the [topic] idea: [verified update]. It creates a useful question for your listeners: [question].
>
> [Spokesperson] can discuss [specific contribution] and is available [times]. If this topic is not a fit, I will close this pitch.

Follow any submission guidance. When your follow-up plan reaches its closure point without a reply, close the active approach. If the producer suggests a later moment, record that timing and ask whether they would welcome an update. Persistence is doing better work, not finding increasingly creative ways around somebody’s refusal.

8. Keep the relationship warm

After a booking, be the guest who arrives prepared and stops when the segment ends. Ask about the wrap-up signal so you can finish your answer within the running order.

During disagreement, keep your voice steady and respond to the substance. Do not diagnose a caller's motives. If the conversation becomes personal, use a clear boundary: "I am happy to discuss the issue. I am not going to make personal comments about that person."

Afterward, send any promised sources and correct your own factual errors promptly. Share an available public link accurately. Describe the discussion fairly even if the host challenged you. A tough question is not proof that the producer betrayed you.

9. Say thank you appropriately

Thank the producer for arranging the segment and the host for the discussion. Mention something specific without writing a review of your own performance. If there is a useful public resource you promised listeners, make sure the program has it.

Template: thank-you

> Thank you for today's conversation about [subject]. I appreciated the question about [specific point]; it helped clarify [useful distinction].
>
> Here is the resource promised during the segment: [link]. If you need a factual follow-up, I am reachable at [professional contact]. Please thank [producer or team member] for the arrangements.

Do not send a gift as payment for friendly treatment or ask the producer to suppress a fair question next time. Respect the program's professional rules. The relationship gets stronger when people can trust your contribution, not when they owe you a favor.

10. Put it to work

Five takeaways

1. Know whether the program wants explanation, advice, debate, or a personal account.
2. Find the producer or published booking route; leave caller lines for their stated purpose.
3. Pitch a worthwhile audience question and an honestly limited contribution.
4. Prepare for follow-ups, callers, disagreement, and changing segment lengths.
5. Answer directly, acknowledge uncertainty, and keep professional boundaries clear.

Before you agree

- ☐ I listened to a full relevant discussion.
- ☐ The spokesperson understands the actual format.
- ☐ Facts, sources, limits, and likely objections are on one page.
- ☐ Timing and connection instructions are confirmed.
- ☐ Promised listener resources are ready to send.

Do this now: write the hardest fair question a caller could ask about your subject. Answer it aloud without attacking the caller or changing the topic. Then cut your answer in half. You are practicing clarity under pressure, which is far more useful than practicing applause.

Sources

Checked November 23, 2026:

- WOSU: All Sides program page.
- WOSU: Tips for calling All Sides.



Chapter 6 — Blogs

1. Know the opportunity

A blog can put your story in front of exactly the people who care about it. That is the attraction. The complication is that a beautiful website can be a thoughtful publication, a company marketing channel, a personal project, or a checkout page wearing an editorial hat.

Decide what you are seeking: an interview, an expert quotation, an independent review, a guest article, or a clearly identified sponsored placement. Those arrangements come with different expectations. Asking for one while quietly expecting another is how a simple introduction becomes a very tedious email chain.

Your useful result might be a relevant article people can find and share long after publication. Choose an audience and a purpose before chasing a byline. Being featured somewhere is less important than being useful to the readers who are there.

2. Find the right contact

Start on the publication itself. Read the About page, author biographies, editorial contact page, contributor guidance, and any advertising or sponsorship information. Look for the editor responsible for the section you fit. On a smaller publication, that may be the owner and writer; on a larger one, it may be a section editor.

Use the published address or form. Record the relevant page, the editor's name and role if available, the intended section, and whether unsolicited contributions are accepted. If the guidelines ask for an outline first, send a focused outline so the editor can help settle the scope before you draft.

The differences are real: Smashing Magazine asks for an outline explaining the audience, takeaways, and author's relevant expertise. A List Apart accepts several submission stages and describes an editorial revision process. Follow the publication in front of you.

Check that the outlet has identifiable people, coherent subject coverage, and a way to contact them. Read several articles. An impressive-looking site with unclear ownership and unrelated paid posts deserves more investigation before you associate your name with it.

3. Do your homework

Find recent pieces relevant to your topic. Notice the audience's starting knowledge, the style of headlines, the depth of examples, and how sources are credited. Search the publication for your proposed subject. A fresh headline does not rescue an article they published last Tuesday.

Evaluate fit through the work itself. A big follower count does not tell you whether readers need your contribution. If reach matters to your decision, ask for an explanation of the audience and the basis for any claimed figures. Treat unsupported claims as unanswered questions.

Example scenario: an independent cycling shop wants to contribute a guide for new commuters. A local transport blog may welcome a practical route-planning piece. Its readers probably do not need a thousand words about the shop's magnificent commitment to excellence. They need to get to work with their bicycle and dignity intact.

4. Make the introduction

For a warm introduction, give your mutual contact a clear reason to connect you: "Would you be comfortable introducing me to the editor? I have a beginner-focused idea that builds on their recent commuting guide." Let the contact decide whether the connection is appropriate.

For a cold introduction, prove relevance in one specific sentence and offer a useful next step.

Template: first approach

> Subject: Article idea for [section]: [specific reader question]
>
> Hi [editor],
>
> Your piece on [recent subject] left a useful follow-on question: [question]. I can offer [an interview, expert contribution, or guest article] explaining [reader benefit], with [specific evidence or practical example].
>
> My relevant background is [accurate qualification]. Would you like a short outline? I have read your [contributor guidance] and can work within [relevant requirement].
>
> [Name and professional contact]

Personalization means understanding the publication. Name the specific reader question your contribution would answer.

5. Make the pitch

Give the editor a clear proposed angle, intended reader, useful material, and reason your contribution belongs there. For a guest article, include a brief outline and disclose any commercial interest that could affect how the editor evaluates it.

Weak pitch: "We would like to post an SEO-friendly article on your blog with links to our business. We can write about anything."

Better pitch: "Would a beginner's guide to planning a first bicycle commute suit your local transport section? It would cover route testing, arrival logistics, and questions to ask before buying equipment. The proposed contributor owns a local cycling shop; the

article would explain that relationship, avoid product promotion, and follow your editorial requirements. I can send an outline before drafting."

Name the intended reader and the useful outcome before choosing the supporting examples.

If you are offering an independent review opportunity, explain what is available and let the editor control the assessment. A product sample does not purchase praise. Clarify return arrangements and any conditions before sending something physical.

6. Handle the response

An interested editor needs clear expectations. Confirm the scope, deadline, length, format, author credit, fee or payment terms, exclusivity and republication rights, relevant commercial relationship, image permissions, and editing process. Ask what is permitted before promising links, publication dates, or reuse elsewhere.

Template: response to interest

> Thanks, [name]. I can prepare [agreed contribution] covering [scope] by [date and time zone]. Could you confirm the length, submission format, image requirements, author-credit arrangement, and review process?
>
> My relevant commercial connection is [accurate description or none]. Please also confirm whether this is an editorial contribution or a paid placement so the agreement and labeling are clear.

If redirected, contact the suggested editor through the appropriate route. For questions, answer specifically. Silence means the pitch is unresolved. Ask whether a later idea would be welcome after "not now"; respect a firm no.

If money enters the conversation, clarify what it pays for. An advertisement or sponsored article should be presented transparently as such. Keep paid placement separate from claims of independent editorial endorsement.

7. Follow up with purpose

Follow the publication's stated response window. When none is given, use 'The follow-up decision' in Your PR Toolkit for an optional plan. A sharper outline, a timely development, or a stronger source improves a follow-up; one concise reminder can also be appropriate where permitted, even without new facts.

Template: useful follow-up

> Hi [name], one update on the [article idea]: [new verified development or improved angle]. A short outline would now cover [three concise points].
>
> This may fit your readers preparing for [relevant occasion]. Would an outline be useful? If the subject is not a fit, I will close this pitch.

If there is no response after that one follow-up and the applicable waiting period, close the active approach and move on. Do not submit the same contribution through every address on the site. If an editor invites a later approach, note the timing and permitted scope. A rejection can improve your next idea without becoming a negotiation over this one.

8. Keep the relationship warm

Meet the agreed deadline. Send a clean document with sensible headings, source links, checked names, and clearly identified image rights. Identify any change that materially affects the article. Do not

hide a new sales pitch inside the final paragraph after the editor approved an educational outline.

Respond constructively to edits. Correct factual errors with supporting information. Distinguish a necessary correction from your preference for a shinier adjective.

When the article appears, read it. Check links and factual details, then share the public link with accurate credit. Ask about permissions before republishing the full text. Keep future ideas relevant to the editor's actual section. A useful source brings information even when there is no immediate byline to collect.

9. Say thank you appropriately

Thank the person who made the piece better, not just the person whose name appears on the site. An editor may have spent time clarifying your argument, checking sources, or helping an image make sense on a phone.

Template: thank-you

> Thank you for publishing [article title], [name]. I appreciated your work on [specific improvement]. I have checked the published details and shared the public link with credit to [publication].
>
> If readers raise factual questions, I am happy to help through [professional contact]. Here is the [additional resource] I promised: [link].

Do not turn appreciation into a surprise request for favorable future coverage. Respect the outlet's gift policies. If a sponsored arrangement was agreed, handle payment through the documented business process; a private gift is not a substitute for a clear agreement.

10. Put it to work

Five takeaways

1. Decide whether you want editorial coverage, a contribution, a review, or paid placement.
2. Read the publication, identify its people, and use its stated submission route.
3. Pitch a specific reader benefit supported by useful material.
4. Agree on expectations and disclose relevant commercial relationships.
5. Deliver clean work, credit the publication, and respect reuse arrangements.

Before you send

- ☐ I can name the audience and relevant section.
- ☐ My idea adds something the publication has not just covered.
- ☐ The editor's public contact route is verified.
- ☐ My qualifications and commercial interests are stated accurately.
- ☐ My proposed next step is small and clear.

Do this now: choose one relevant blog and read three recent articles. Write a proposed headline and three outline points that would help the same readers. If your business name vanished from the idea, would it still be useful? Keep improving it until the answer is yes.

Sources

Checked November 23, 2026:

- Smashing Magazine: Writing A Smashing Article.
- A List Apart: Write for Us.



Chapter 7 — Public Events

1. Know the opportunity

A room full of people can be a PR opportunity. It can also be an expensive afternoon spent carrying a tote bag. Decide what you want before collecting the bag.

Public events include conferences, festivals, trade shows, launches, exhibitions, and public programs. Your useful opportunity might be a demonstration, a panel contribution, a partnership, or a conversation that leads to something later. Attendance alone does not create coverage.

Choose one primary outcome: meet a relevant organizer, demonstrate something useful, contribute to the program, or introduce a reporter to an accessible story. Give yourself a finish line you can control. “Have three relevant conversations” gives you something useful to plan and review.

Separate the event’s audience from your own wish list. A neighborhood food festival and an industry procurement conference might both welcome your business, but they need different contributions. Start with what their visitors came to learn, solve, or enjoy.

2. Find the right contact

One event can have several decision makers. Contact the person who controls the opportunity you want:

- **Programmer or conference director:** sessions, panels, demonstrations, and the running order.
- **Partnership or sponsorship contact:** commercial packages and organizational collaborations.

- **Press or media contact:** accreditation, interview coordination, and event media arrangements.
- **Operations contact:** access, setup, power, deliveries, accessibility, and practical restrictions.

Look on the event's official website, current agenda, exhibitor information, and organizer profile. A ticketing listing can help identify the organizer; Eventbrite explains its organizer contact route. Verify the route against the organizer's own information.

Record the person's role, the public professional contact route, the page where you found it, and the date checked. Never guess an employee's address and call it verified.

A press pass is not permission to speak onstage. A sponsorship purchase is not a promise that journalists will cover you. Keep those conversations separate.

3. Do your homework

Read the current program and last event's recap. Who attends? What topics already have strong representation? What was missing? Notice whether the event accepts proposals, invites speakers, or sells exhibitor packages.

Create a small event brief with five answers: audience, contribution, decision date, practical requirements, and desired next step. Add the official submission instructions. If a proposal form is required, use it so reviewers receive the information they need to compare contributions. As a real example, SXSW's PanelPicker advice favors specific proposals with clear titles and useful supporting material. Check each event's own current requirements.

Check the event's approach to photography, filming, demonstrations, and commercial promotion before planning assets. If your idea requires a loud machine, a live animal, or a reliable internet connection, mention that early. That gives operations staff time to assess the space, safety, and setup needs.

Example: A repair business notices that a sustainability fair offers product stalls but no basic repair demonstration. Its useful angle is teaching visitors one safe maintenance check, rather than asking for a sales presentation.

4. Make the introduction

A warm introduction should connect your contribution to the organizer's need. Ask a mutual contact whether they are comfortable making it. Supply a short paragraph they can forward; do not volunteer them as your personal booking department.

For a cold introduction, show that you know which event you are approaching. Name one relevant program detail, explain your contribution, and ask for the correct route. Keep your life story available for the moment someone actually needs it.

Template — first approach

> Subject: A practical [topic] contribution for [event]
>
> Hello [name], I saw that [event] is helping [audience] with [specific theme]. I work on [relevant subject] and could offer [brief demonstration, discussion, or resource] that helps visitors [useful outcome]. Is [published proposal route] the right way to submit this, or does someone else coordinate that part of the program? Thank you, [name and relevant link].

An introduction opens the right conversation. It does not need to close the whole arrangement.

5. Make the pitch

Make your offer easy to evaluate. Include the audience benefit, proposed format, realistic duration, supporting evidence, and what you need from the organizer. State any fee or commercial element

clearly when it becomes relevant. Do not hide a sales booth inside a supposedly educational talk.

Example — weak: "We would love exposure at your event. Our founder is amazing. What can you do for us?"

Example — better: "Your program focuses on reducing household waste. We can lead a short demonstration showing visitors how to identify three repairable problems before replacing an item. We would bring the sample equipment, provide a plain-language checklist, and avoid individual product sales during the session. May I submit the outline through your program form?"

Offer one useful option first. Ten possible collaborations create ten decisions for a busy person. Once they show interest, discuss sensible alternatives.

If you also approach journalists, pitch an independently useful story. The organizer's enthusiasm is useful context, not an editorial instruction.

6. Handle the response

Interest is the start of planning. Confirm who can approve the arrangement and what happens next.

Template — response to interest

> Thanks, [name]. For [audience], I suggest [format] covering [outcome]. We would provide [people and materials]; we would need [specific support]. Here is [requested outline or sample]. Please confirm the proposal deadline, the decision contact, and any restrictions on promotion or recording. I can send the remaining information by [realistic date].

Answer questions directly. If redirected, thank the first person and approach the suggested contact without pretending you have already been booked. If told "not this year," ask once whether there

is a published route for the next edition.

Silence means you do not know. It does not mean approval. A firm decline means stop pursuing that proposal with that recipient.

Before a booking becomes real, get the agreed contribution, costs, cancellation arrangements, and responsibilities recorded in writing. A friendly conversation is easy to remember differently.

7. Follow up with purpose

Follow the stated decision schedule. When none exists, use 'The follow-up decision' in Your PR Toolkit for an optional plan. The event's proposal deadline and planning stage take precedence; messages sent during the opening morning may disappear beneath genuine emergencies.

A shorter session, a clearer audience benefit, or an answer to a practical concern can improve the decision. If nothing has changed, a single concise reminder may still be appropriate under the toolkit plan where the organizer permits it.

Template — useful follow-up

> Hello [name], one useful addition to my [date] proposal: we can provide [specific resource or simplification], which addresses [program need]. Is the proposal still under consideration, or should I close it for this edition? I am happy to follow your published decision schedule.

If there is no answer after one follow-up and the applicable waiting period, close the active pursuit and move to another opportunity. Do not approach three colleagues to wear down the same decision. Save a revised offer for another suitable event or an invited future submission.

8. Keep the relationship warm

Once involved, become the person organizers are relieved to see. Submit accurate biographies, arrive when requested, respect the schedule, and tell operations staff about changes before those changes become their problem.

During the event, listen as much as you introduce yourself. Ask permission before sending an attendee a resource. A badge scan or a business card should not become a surprise subscription.

Afterward, send the promised material and a short account of what you delivered. If you share photographs or a clip, check that you have the necessary permission and label them accurately. Do not describe a friendly hallway photograph as an organizational endorsement.

Keep separate records for organizers, prospective partners, and journalists. Their interests differ. A relevant introduction or a genuinely helpful resource can maintain a relationship between events. A monthly request for another favor cannot do all the maintenance by itself.

9. Say thank you appropriately

Thank the people who made the contribution work, including the person who solved the microphone problem while everyone else debated the lighting. Make the thanks specific and ask before naming staff publicly.

Template — thank-you

> Thank you, [name], for coordinating [specific contribution]. Your help with [specific detail] made it possible to [actual outcome]. Here is the [resource] I promised. If useful, I can also provide [small relevant follow-through]. I appreciated working with you and the team.

Use outcomes you actually observed. “Visitors asked for the checklist” is useful if it happened. “We transformed the entire industry” is difficult to fit in a thank-you and even harder to support.

A clear message and reliable follow-through usually do more than a gift. Follow the recipient’s professional rules, and never connect a thank-you to an expected booking, editorial decision, or special treatment.

10. Put it to work

Five takeaways

1. Pick an outcome before picking an event.
2. Programming, sponsorship, operations, and press access are different jobs.
3. Offer something visitors can use, with practical needs stated early.
4. Make each follow-up improve the decision; respect a clear no.
5. Delivering smoothly is part of your next pitch.

Your event checklist

- ☐ Name the audience and one useful contribution.
- ☐ Find the current official contact or submission route.
- ☐ Check timing, costs, recording, and setup requirements.
- ☐ Send a focused proposal and record the next decision date.
- ☐ Prepare the resource and thank-you you will deliver afterward.

Do this now: Choose one real event. Find its official program page and write three sentences: who attends, what you can contribute, and who decides. Save the source link beside the contact. You now have an outreach plan with somewhere to go.

Sources: Eventbrite: Contact the event organizer; SXSW: What makes for a good PanelPicker proposal?. Checked November 23, 2026. The templates and illustrative examples above are original applications of the chapter's advice.



Chapter 8 — Community Events & Outreach

1. Know the opportunity

Community PR begins with people who still live there after your campaign ends. They remember whether you helped. They also remember whether you arrived with six branded banners and left before the chairs were stacked.

Useful outreach connects what you can contribute with what a community actually wants. That might mean supporting a neighborhood event, sharing a skill, helping a nonprofit communicate, or joining an existing project. The relationship is the work; a photograph is optional.

Ask one uncomfortable question before you begin: would this still be worthwhile if nobody published it? If the answer is yes, you have a promising starting point. If the answer is no, redesign the offer until someone besides your marketing department benefits.

Set a manageable outcome: fill a requested volunteer role, make a useful introduction, or help a partner deliver an agreed activity. Recognition may follow good work. It cannot substitute for it.

2. Find the right contact

Start close to the need. Search official neighborhood association pages, library calendars, municipal event listings, nonprofit websites, and local volunteer centers. Read the organization's own description before deciding what it needs.

Points of Light's volunteer page links to opportunities searchable by location and interest. Idealist's VolunteerMatch page directs readers to its current volunteering service. Use directories to discover

organizations, then verify the current opportunity and contact with the organization itself.

Look for a volunteer coordinator, program manager, community liaison, or named event organizer. A communications officer might handle publicity while someone else decides whether your help is useful. Ask who owns that decision.

Build a small partner map: organization, community served, stated priority, appropriate contact, contribution you can realistically make, and source link. Add capacity constraints you discover. “They cannot supervise a large group” is more useful than “great logo for our website.”

3. Do your homework

Listen before proposing. Read the current volunteer needs, recent updates, and participation requirements. Attend a public meeting or open event when appropriate. Notice who does the quiet work and who has already been asked the same question repeatedly.

Ask: “What would make the next event easier?” and “What do people offer that creates more work for you?” The second question can save everybody a surprisingly elaborate mistake.

Find out what training, accessibility arrangements, supervision, or safeguarding procedures apply. Follow the host’s requirements and stay within your competence. Offering help does not exempt you from an application process.

Example: A small design business wants to support a neighborhood meal program. After asking, it learns that the urgent need is a readable pickup sign and consistent weekly help, rather than another fundraising logo. The business offers those two things and lets the program decide whether they fit.

Research should change the offer. Otherwise you are just decorating your original assumption with browser tabs.

4. Make the introduction

A warm introduction works best when the mutual contact knows your intentions and capacity. Ask whether an introduction would actually help. Do not borrow a respected community member's name to make an unsolicited proposal look approved.

In a cold approach, introduce your connection to the community and offer a relevant, limited contribution. Say what you can do, how much time you can commit, and that you are willing to follow the organization's process.

Template — first approach

> Hello [name], I am [brief local connection or relevant role]. Your current request for [published need] looks like something I may be able to help with. I can offer [specific skill, materials, or time] within [realistic limit]. Would that be useful, and what is the right process for discussing it? I am happy to work within your existing plans.

Ask which part of the existing plan your contribution could support. Leave room for the answer to change your offer.

5. Make the pitch

Write a small proposal the partner can assess without creating a project manager position just for you. Name the need, contribution, workload, decision maker, and how you will know the activity helped.

Be clear about commercial interests. If you want public acknowledgment, discuss it openly and accept the answer. Agree on any acknowledgment or photography before committing resources, so the partner can consider those requests separately from the help.

Example — weak: "We want to partner with your charity. Can you organize a volunteer day for our team and get local media there?"

Example — better: "You listed help preparing the community garden for spring. Four of us can attend your existing work session and bring the supplies you identify. We can follow your orientation and stay for cleanup. Would that help, or is a smaller group more practical?"

Keep the first commitment modest enough to deliver well. A successful small project gives both sides evidence for a larger one. An ambitious promise with missing volunteers gives the coordinator another reason to distrust ambitious promises.

6. Handle the response

When the organization is interested, confirm the job before recruiting people or ordering anything.

Template — response to interest

> Thank you, [name]. To confirm, we would provide [agreed contribution] on [date or schedule], and [coordinator] would be our contact. Please send the participation requirements and any limits on photography, promotion, or bringing additional people. We will handle [our responsibilities]. Is there anything here that would create extra work for your team?

If asked a question, answer the actual question. If redirected, respect the person's role and follow the recommended route. If the organization is full, ask whether a published waiting list or future opportunity exists.

"Not now" may reflect genuine capacity constraints. A firm no ends that proposal. Do not appeal to board members, donors, or friends to pressure staff into accepting help they cannot use.

Silence leaves the arrangement unconfirmed. Keep your team informed so nobody assumes a public announcement equals a booking.

7. Follow up with purpose

Let the organization's schedule guide your timing. Community teams may include part-time staff and volunteers with other commitments. If no response window is given, use 'The follow-up decision' in Your PR Toolkit for an optional plan, with the host's participation dates and instructions taking precedence.

If a follow-up is appropriate, reduce the work required to answer. Offer a smaller contribution, supply requested information, or clarify availability. Where permitted, one concise reminder can also be appropriate without new facts.

Template — useful follow-up

> Hello [name], following up on my offer to help with [specific need]. We can reduce the group to [size] or join an existing shift if that is easier. If there is no current need, I will close this proposal and use your published volunteering route for future opportunities. Thank you for considering it.

After one concise follow-up and the applicable waiting period without a reply, close the active proposal unless invited to reconnect. A changed need can justify a fresh proposal later; record what has changed and how your offer now fits.

Reliability begins before the activity. Promise less than your most optimistic calendar suggests.

8. Keep the relationship warm

Arrive prepared, follow the coordinator's instructions, and finish the unglamorous jobs too. Your reputation is being built while you move tables, correct a sign, and return borrowed equipment.

Afterward, review the work with your partner. Ask what helped, what added effort, and whether continuing would be welcome. Use measures that fit the project: a resource delivered, an agreed shift

covered, or an actual participant response. Avoid inventing grand impact from a cheerful afternoon.

Keep publicity separate from participation. Agree on what can be shared and who approves it. Treat stories, photographs, and names as belonging to people, not as free raw material for a campaign. Respect a person's refusal to be photographed without making them explain it to the group.

Maintain contact through relevant help and honest updates. If your capacity changes, say so early. A straightforward "we cannot cover that date" is kinder than an enthusiastic yes followed by a vanishing act.

9. Say thank you appropriately

Thank partners for their time, knowledge, and coordination. They helped you contribute effectively; that work counts.

Template — thank-you

> Thank you, [name], for guiding our involvement in [activity]. Your advice about [specific detail] helped us deliver [actual contribution]. We have completed [promised follow-through]. Please let me know if we missed anything practical. We appreciated the chance to support the work, and we will follow your preference on any public acknowledgment.

Give credit accurately when public thanks are welcome. Do not turn "helped for one afternoon" into "our organization led the entire project." Ask before using a partner's name or logo in promotional material.

If you want to donate, use the organization's stated process. Keep the donation separate from expectations of access, endorsement, or favorable publicity. Use the thank-you to confirm that the agreed work and any practical follow-through are complete.

10. Put it to work

Five takeaways

1. Community needs should shape the offer.
2. Discover organizations through real directories; verify needs with the host.
3. A small reliable commitment beats an impressive proposal that creates work.
4. Agree on publicity instead of treating participation as permission.
5. Listen after the activity as carefully as you listened before it.

Your outreach checklist

- ☐ Identify one organization and its stated current need.
- ☐ Find the coordinator and check the participation process.
- ☐ Define your contribution, time limit, and responsibilities.
- ☐ Ask about access, supervision, and publicity preferences.
- ☐ Record what you promised and deliver the follow-through.

Do this now: Find one local organization's current needs page. Write down what it requests, what you can reliably offer, and one question you need answered. If those do not match, keep looking. The useful match is the beginning of your proposal.

Sources: Points of Light: volunteering and opportunity discovery; Idealist: the current home of VolunteerMatch. Checked November 23, 2026. The templates and illustrative examples above are original applications of the chapter's advice.



Chapter 9 — Public Speaking

1. Know the opportunity

A microphone makes you louder. A useful idea gives people a reason to listen.

Speaking can build recognition, demonstrate expertise, and start professional relationships. Begin with the audience's gain. What will people understand, decide, or do differently because they spent their time with you?

Choose a room you can genuinely serve. A library workshop, association meeting, customer gathering, or industry conference may be a better first fit than a famous stage. The right room contains people who can use your idea, even if its greenroom is technically a supply cupboard.

Describe the opportunity in one sentence: "I will help [audience] achieve [specific outcome] through [talk or workshop]." If you need six sentences to explain the outcome, narrow the topic.

Pick one main idea and build around it. A short useful talk is easier to remember than an ambitious tour through everything you have ever learned since buying your first laptop.

2. Find the right contact

Look for conference program teams, association education directors, library program coordinators, workshop managers, and published calls for proposals. Start on the host's official site and check its current process.

Past speakers can explain their experience or make an introduction when appropriate. They do not automatically control next year's program. A venue manager may rent the room without choosing who speaks in it.

For practice, Toastmasters' club finder lets you explore clubs and contact club officers. Treat that as a learning opportunity, not a promise of a commercial speaking booking.

Create a contact record with the event, audience, decision maker, submission route, format, deadline, and source link. Record whether the engagement is paid, unpaid, or still unspecified. Do not confuse a speaker invitation with a sponsorship package that requires you to purchase access.

The best contact is the person responsible for the program you can improve.

3. Do your homework

Watch or read earlier sessions. Note the audience's existing knowledge, session length, level of interaction, and commercial restrictions. Study the proposal instructions before polishing your biography.

Prepare a one-page talk proposal containing a clear title, a brief summary, three audience outcomes, a simple outline, your relevant experience, and a link to a genuine sample. A phone recording of a well-explained idea can be more useful than a dramatic montage that proves only that you own transitions.

Check your evidence. The TEDx speaker guide emphasizes a developed idea, factual support, clear structure, and rehearsal. Those are useful disciplines; a particular host's rules still govern its own event.

Example: Instead of promising to "transform small-business communication," propose helping first-time business owners write one clear explanation of what they do. Show the exercise participants will complete. That is an outcome a programmer can picture.

4. Make the introduction

For a warm introduction, give your contact a forwardable paragraph explaining the audience, idea, and useful result. Ask permission before mentioning that person's name in a proposal.

A cold introduction should show program fit immediately. Lead with the contribution, then explain why you can deliver it. A long list of credentials cannot rescue an idea designed for a different audience.

Template — first approach

> Subject: Session proposal: [clear audience outcome]
>
> Hello [name], I noticed [specific theme or audience detail] in your program. I can offer a [format] on [focused topic] that helps [audience] [practical result]. My relevant experience is [accurate brief detail], and here is [genuine sample]. Would this fit your current program, and should I submit it through [published route]?

Keep the message short enough to forward intact. If the host requires a form, use the form and adapt the same core idea to its questions. A complete submission helps the program team compare your audience outcomes with its needs.

5. Make the pitch

Sell the audience's result, the quality of the idea, and your ability to deliver it. Distinguish a talk from a workshop: a talk explains an idea; a workshop gives people structured time to practice. Both can be useful. Make any commercial element explicit so the host can decide whether it belongs in the program.

Example — weak: "I am a passionate thought leader who can speak on innovation, success, branding, leadership, and anything else you need."

Example — better: "For your first-time founders track, I propose a practical workshop on answering 'What does your business do?' Participants will identify the customer's problem, write a plain-language explanation, and test it with a partner. I will provide the worksheet and adapt the exercise to the allotted time."

Include the exact next step: review the outline, assess the sample, or confirm whether a formal submission is welcome. If asked about fees, travel, or availability, answer honestly. Keep your pitch realistic enough that the delivered session can fulfill it.

6. Handle the response

Interest is encouraging. A confirmed agreement is useful. Move from one to the other by settling the practical details.

Template — response to interest

> Thanks, [name]. I can deliver [session] for [audience] on [date], subject to confirming the arrangements. Please confirm the duration, question time, format, fee and expenses, recording plans, accessibility needs, and main contact. I will provide [outline, biography, headshot, or materials] by [date]. Shall we record the agreed scope in your speaker agreement or a written booking summary?

If redirected, contact the suggested programmer without implying acceptance. If asked for changes, decide whether you can still deliver a useful session. "Not now" may mean a later program; ask once about the appropriate future route.

A firm decline ends that proposal. Silence leaves it unconfirmed. Do not announce yourself as a speaker because someone replied with a smile and the words "interesting idea."

Once booked, confirm slides, microphones, timing signals, remote access where relevant, and what happens if plans change.

7. Follow up with purpose

Use the host's review calendar. If a decision date exists, let it arrive. Where no schedule is given, use 'The follow-up decision' in Your PR Toolkit for an optional plan. The event's actual proposal and programming deadlines take precedence.

A clearer outcome, a relevant sample, or a format that solves a programming concern makes a follow-up stronger. Where permitted, one concise reminder can also help establish whether the proposal is still active, even without new facts.

Template — useful follow-up

> Hello [name], following up on my [topic] proposal. I have attached [requested outline or useful sample]. The session can also work as [sensible alternative] if that better fits the program. Is it still under review, or should I close it for this event? I am happy to follow your decision timetable.

After a clear no, improve the proposal for another suitable audience. After one follow-up and the applicable waiting period without a reply, close the active pursuit. Use the preparation you have done to rehearse the talk and approach another fitting audience.

8. Keep the relationship warm

The next booking starts with delivering this one well. Rehearse aloud with a timer. Test your explanation with someone outside your field. Cut anything that takes time without helping the main idea.

Prepare for ordinary problems: missing slides, a shortened slot, a nervous opening, and a question you cannot answer. "I do not know; here is how I would check" protects your credibility better than confident improvisation about facts.

Afterward, send promised resources through the agreed route. Offer an optional way for interested attendees to stay in touch; let them choose it. Do not add the audience to a list because you briefly shared a room.

Build a reusable speaker folder: current biography, headshot, clear session descriptions, a genuine speaking sample, worksheets, and authorized photographs or clips. Ask permission before reusing recordings or testimonials. Record what questions people asked, then improve the next version of the talk. That is useful evidence for a future proposal.

9. Say thank you appropriately

Thank the programmer and the people who helped you deliver: moderators, technicians, hosts, and volunteers. Keep the thanks concrete and any public credit accurate.

Template — thank-you

> Thank you, [name], for inviting me to contribute [session]. I appreciated [specific support or audience interaction]. Here is the [resource] I promised, ready to share through your preferred route. If you have feedback on how the session served your audience, I would value it. Please also pass my thanks to [team or role].

Ask for feedback before asking for another stage. If the organizer offers kind words, request permission to quote them and agree on the exact wording and attribution. Do not upgrade “thanks for coming” into a glowing endorsement.

An expensive gift is unnecessary and can make things awkward. A helpful resource, an accurate invoice when applicable, and a professional follow-through are easier to appreciate. Leave the relationship with every promise accounted for.

10. Put it to work

Five takeaways

1. Build the talk around one audience result.
2. Contact the program decision maker through the published route.
3. A specific proposal and genuine sample make your ability easier to assess.
4. Confirm practical arrangements before announcing a booking.
5. Rehearse, deliver, and turn authorized assets into a better next proposal.

Your speaking checklist

- ☐ Write one audience, one idea, and three useful outcomes.
- ☐ Find a fitting host and its actual submission requirements.
- ☐ Prepare a one-page proposal and honest speaking sample.
- ☐ Confirm timing, fee, logistics, recording, and resource handoff.
- ☐ Rehearse aloud and prepare for a shorter slot or missing slides.

Do this now: Record a short explanation of your main idea on your phone. Watch it once. Remove the opening biography and any sentence that does not help the audience understand the point. Record it again. You have started building a speaking sample rather than merely planning to become a speaker.

Whichever channel you choose, professional relationships also need clear personal boundaries. Chapter 10 applies across all these routes, including conversations away from the microphone or stage.

Sources: Toastmasters: Find a Club; TEDx Speaker Guide. Checked November 23, 2026. The templates and illustrative examples above are original applications of the chapter's advice.



Chapter 10 — Charm, Flirtation & Professional Boundaries

You can be charming, attractive, funny, stylish, and excellent at your job at the same time. You do not have to turn yourself into a beige filing cabinet to be taken seriously.

But attention and opportunity can arrive tangled together. A contact thinks your invitation to discuss a project means a date. Someone with access keeps moving the meeting somewhere private. A compliment becomes a negotiation you never agreed to have.

Let's talk about it directly. You can enjoy your appearance and your personality. Neither creates an obligation to offer intimacy, tolerate pressure, or accept an arrangement you do not want. The aim is to make your professional purpose clear and keep your decisions yours.

1. Know the opportunity

Charm is making an interaction pleasant: remembering a name, showing interest, telling a good story, dressing with confidence, and helping someone feel heard. Flirtation adds a possible romantic or sexual signal. Different people read that signal differently. A laugh is not a contract, and a flattering outfit is not a promise.

The practical question is whether the work can move forward on clear professional terms. Can you explain the meeting's purpose? Can you introduce the person to a colleague without rewriting the story? Can either person decline a personal invitation without losing access to the business conversation?

You cannot control somebody else's assumptions. You can state your intentions and watch how they respond. A respectful person adjusts. A person who treats your boundary as the opening round of negotiations has given you useful information.

2. Find the right contact

Use the professional routes from the earlier chapters. An official booking address, editorial form, organizational directory, or event contact gives the interaction a clear beginning. Verify the person's actual role before treating an invitation as access to a show, newsroom, or conference.

Be particularly careful when someone insists that only they can help, discourages ordinary channels, or asks you to keep the entire relationship secret. Ask a concrete question: "Who handles the booking, and can we include them on the next email?" A legitimate opportunity should survive a straightforward question about its process.

Keep the relationship in a contact record: role, work address, reason for contact, agreed next step, and any limits you communicated. Record observable behavior rather than diagnosing motives. "Moved meeting from office to hotel room; declined" is useful. A paragraph guessing what somebody secretly thinks is less useful.

3. Do your homework

Before meeting, decide what you are there to accomplish, what information you can share, and which settings work for you. A public venue, an office with other people present, or a video call can all support a professional conversation. You may invite a colleague without turning the invitation into an accusation.

Set your own practical arrangements: transportation, departure time, and a person who knows where you are when that helps. You can choose not to drink. You can leave early. Preparation gives you

options; it does not make you responsible for somebody else's conduct.

Check the recipient's policies before offering hospitality or a gift. The Society of Professional Journalists' ethics code advises journalists to refuse benefits that threaten independence. A journalist may welcome a useful source document and decline lunch. Treat that distinction as professionalism, not rejection.

4. Make the introduction

Bring the work into the conversation early. "I'd love to discuss a segment about neighborhood businesses" is clearer than "We should get together sometime." You can be warm while naming the purpose.

Template: a friendly professional introduction

> Hi [name], I enjoyed our conversation about [specific subject]. I'd like to discuss [project or story] in a professional meeting. Would a short call or coffee at [public venue] work? I can send a brief agenda first.

If you are uncertain how an invitation is meant, clarify rather than playing detective for a week.

Template: clarify an ambiguous invitation

> Thanks for inviting me. Just to be clear, I'm interested in discussing [professional topic], and I'm treating this as a work meeting. If that matches what you had in mind, let's arrange [specific option].

You do not have to apologize for this sentence. It saves time for both people. You also do not have to make a public speech about your relationship status. Your professional intention is enough.

5. Make the pitch

Keep the opportunity attached to a useful idea. Charm may make a conversation easier; the pitch still needs a relevant audience, a credible contribution, and a practical next step. Avoid suggesting personal access as the reward for professional help.

Example — unclear: "Get me on your show and I'll make it worth your while. Drinks, just us?"

Better: "Your audience has been asking about [problem]. I can explain [useful answer] and bring [evidence or demonstration]. If you're interested, could we schedule a brief producer call?"

The better version tells someone what they are considering. It does not require either person to decode a personal bargain.

When a social conversation starts drifting, return to the work naturally: "I'm glad we met. The piece I'd really like your thoughts on is the community workshop." You do not have to become cold to become clear. Keep a genuine compliment genuine; do not turn affection into a payment plan.

6. Handle the response

A respectful response might be, "Of course—send the agenda." Continue normally. If the person says they meant a date, you can decline it without a lengthy defense: "Thanks for being clear. I'm not interested in dating, but I'm happy to discuss the project professionally."

Watch actions after the conversation. Repeated sexual remarks, unwanted touching, pressure to isolate you, or a suggestion that access depends on intimacy call for a firmer response or an exit. You do not need certainty about someone's private intentions to decline a setting or behavior you do not want.

Template: redirect a private meeting

> A private room doesn't work for me. I'm available for a video call or a meeting at [public venue/office] to discuss [agenda]. Please let me know if one of those options works.

If the response is ridicule, guilt, or a threat to your opportunity, the problem is not your wording. You can stop engaging. When you feel unsafe, prioritize getting to a safer place and support over delivering a perfect line.

7. Follow up with purpose

There is a vital difference between improving a rejected pitch and pushing past a personal boundary. A newsroom saying your story is too early may leave room for a later update. A person declining romantic attention has not invited you to improve your conversion rate.

The same rule protects you. If you have said the meeting is professional, you do not have to keep restating it indefinitely. A brief written recap can remove ambiguity: "As discussed, our next conversation is about the event proposal, with the organizer included."

Template: end contact after a boundary is ignored

> I have been clear that this contact is professional. The continued [specific behavior] is not acceptable to me, so I am ending this conversation. Please do not contact me further.

Use that wording only if sending it is appropriate for your circumstances; ending contact does not require another reply. Preserve relevant messages if useful, involve a trusted colleague or

the organization's appropriate contact when needed, and decide what support you want. You do not owe a tutorial to someone who is pressuring you.

8. Keep the relationship warm

Healthy professional warmth comes from attention and reliability. Remember the project. Send the material you promised. Introduce people when both want the introduction. Congratulate a contact on work you actually read. Share relevant ideas without attaching a request to every message.

Keep communication on mutually comfortable channels. A work reply does not automatically invite late-night personal messages. Ask before moving a conversation somewhere more personal, and accept the answer without making the person manage your disappointment.

If you are the one with influence, make your standards especially clear. Do not make a junior contact guess whether access requires social attention. Give feedback on the work, offer ordinary meeting options, and keep personal invitations separate from professional decisions. Being easy to work with includes making it easy to say no.

9. Say thank you appropriately

A useful thank-you is specific, proportionate, and free of hidden conditions. "Thank you for making the introduction; the organizer and I are discussing a workshop" closes the loop. "I owe you anything you want" opens a conversation you probably did not intend.

For journalists, start with a note rather than a gift. For other professional contacts, check policy and context before offering anything of value. When in doubt, sincere words and reliable follow-through travel well.

Never treat professional assistance as a debt payable through affection. You can appreciate a person's help and decline their personal attention. Likewise, if you help someone, their thanks is not consent to a date, touching, or further access. This is not a complicated courtesy once everyone stops pretending the subject is unspeakable.

10. Put it to work

Five takeaways

1. You can be attractive and warm while setting clear professional terms.
2. Name the purpose of a meeting before ambiguity grows around it.
3. Notice how someone responds to a boundary, rather than trying to read their mind.
4. Keep gifts, professional access, and personal attention from becoming a hidden exchange.
5. A valuable opportunity does not make your limits negotiable.

Your checklist

- ☐ I can describe the professional purpose in one sentence.
- ☐ The role, meeting place, and participants make sense for that purpose.
- ☐ I have a comfortable way to change the setting or leave.
- ☐ I know what I will say if someone expects more.
- ☐ I will respect other people's limits as clearly as I expect mine to be respected.

Do this now: write your own short version of the ambiguous-invitation and private-meeting scripts. Say them aloud until they sound like you. Keep them somewhere easy to find. Confidence is

useful; having the words ready is useful on the day confidence takes an unscheduled lunch break.

Sources and further reading

- Society of Professional Journalists, Code of Ethics: professional independence and gift boundaries for journalists.
- PRSA, Ethics resources: the profession's emphasis on honesty, independence, and fairness.
- RAINN, Consent 101: clear, voluntary communication; appearance or flirtation does not establish consent. The meeting scripts and PR examples above are the book's practical guidance.

Your PR Toolkit

Adapt these tools to the recipient's current instructions and the story you can support.

The contact tracker

Copy these semicolon-separated headers into a spreadsheet or notebook. Complete the first group before pitching; add the second as the relationship develops.

Before the pitch: outlet or organization; contact and verified role; public contact source and date checked; audience or beat and relevant recent work; story angle.

After sending: first approach date; response/status; next action and date; last useful interaction; preferences and outcome.

Filled practice row: Practice Neighborhood News; community editor; practice staff page checked March 1, 2027; neighborhood services / recent library-hours article; evening tool-library access; March 1, 2027; sent—awaiting reply; optional fit-check March 8; initial pitch March 1; public form / no outcome yet.

For real outreach, replace this practice row with actual source links, contact instructions, and facts.

Keep private information out of shared copies. A good tracker is a memory aid, not a dossier. Record enough to work thoughtfully without collecting personal details you do not need.

The pitch check

- ☐ This audience has a reason to care about the idea.
- ☐ I have the correct role and submission route.
- ☐ My introduction shows real familiarity with the work.

- ☐ My angle is clear without a cloud of adjectives.
- ☐ Every factual claim is supported.
- ☐ I explain what I can provide and when.
- ☐ My next-step request is specific and easy to answer.
- ☐ Links work, files are shareable, and permissions are clear.
- ☐ I have checked the name, spelling, date, and time zone.
- ☐ I would be comfortable receiving this message.

The follow-up decision

Interested? Answer the question, confirm the deadline and format, and deliver the promised material.

Wrong person? Thank them for any guidance. Use a publicly listed route or an introduction they have agreed to make; do not imply they endorsed you.

Not now? Read the actual reason. If they named a suitable future date, record it. If you have a genuinely new development later, approach it as new information rather than reopening an argument.

Firm no or no further contact? Close the approach and respect the boundary.

Silence? One brief fit-check or reminder can be appropriate where permitted, even without new facts; a genuine useful update is better. Following up is optional, and no reply is owed.

An illustrative plan, not an industry rule: for an ordinary **nonurgent** pitch with no published response window, you could wait five working days, send **one** concise reminder if permitted, then wait five further working days before marking the active approach **closed—no reply**. You can also skip the reminder and close it. Count working days after the sending date.

For example, send Monday, March 1, 2027; optionally remind on Monday, March 8; close on Monday, March 15 if still unanswered, assuming no holidays. A reminder could say: "One brief follow-up on the evening-access idea. Would it fit your community reporting? If not, I will leave it here."

Recipient rules, agreed schedules, and actual deadlines override this example. Wait for a stated decision date; do not follow up where prohibited. If an event's decision window has passed, close that approach rather than demanding a rushed decision. Closing ends this proposal; a relevant future idea remains possible.

The interview card

Put these on one page: audience; format; agreed subject; recording or live arrangements; timing and time zone; contact for changes; three useful points; one clear example for each; facts and source links; topics outside your knowledge; any privacy or recording ground rules agreed in advance; the practical next step an audience can take if appropriate.

For a reported interview, review Chapter 2's interview-ground-rules box before sharing sensitive information. Put any explicitly agreed terms on this card; live or recorded does not itself establish confidentiality.

Practice answering a question directly before adding context. When you need to correct yourself, say so plainly. Do not fill an uncertain answer with confidence you borrowed from the room.

The thank-you check

Name the specific help. Keep the message proportionate. Complete your promised follow-through. Avoid asking for another favor inside every thank-you. For journalists, a note is usually a better starting point than a gift; respect the recipient's professional policy.

When an error appears

First, confirm that it is a factual error rather than a description you dislike. Save the published passage and the correct evidence. Use the outlet's correction process or the relevant professional contact. State what is wrong, what is correct, and where the evidence can be found. Be concise and courteous. Do not demand to rewrite the entire piece as a condition of fixing a name or date.

If the mistake began with you, own that clearly. "I gave you the wrong date; the correct date is [date], supported here [source]" is more useful than a paragraph about how busy you were.

Worked practice case: evening tool-library access

Everything in this case is an assumed practice detail, including the organization, outlet, messages, dates, and decisions. It is not a reported booking or evidence of results. Replace assumptions with checked facts and use the recipient's verified public route.

Build the fact sheet

The practice organization is Garden Ward Tool Library. Its coordinator, Alex, wants residents to know about a proposed evening trial.

Claim	Practice status	Public source to verify before real use
Tuesday evening trial begins April 6, 2027, 6–8 p.m.	Planned; not yet operating	Published opening-hours notice; confirm with coordinator
Borrowing requires membership	Assumed existing rule	Current public membership page and eligibility terms
Evening access will help more residents	Question to investigate; not a measured result	Do not present as fact; seek evidence and willing interviewees

The first two claims support the pitch; the third becomes a reporting question. Verify public pages and dates; report any changes.

Send the focused pitch

Practice submission through the outlet's public story form:

> Subject: Proposed evening tool-library trial and access for residents
>
> Hello Community Editor,
>
> Your recent article on library opening hours raised a similar question for shared tools: who can use a service that is open only during the day?
>
> Garden Ward Tool Library plans to trial Tuesday opening from 6–8 p.m., beginning April 6. Borrowing requires membership. I coordinate the library and can explain the proposed schedule and membership rules, supply the public notices, and discuss what we still need to learn about demand.
>
> Would the access question fit your community reporting? I can provide a short fact sheet or arrange an initial call. The trial has not started, so we cannot yet claim it has increased use.
>
> Thank you, Alex, Garden Ward Tool Library coordinator

Record **sent—awaiting reply**, as in the tracker row above. If silence continues, the optional March 8/15 reminder-and-closure plan applies. The following reply is a separate practice branch.

Bound the commitment and deliver

Example editor reply: "Please send the schedule and basic membership requirement by Thursday, March 4, at noon Central. Can you also arrange interviews with three users?"

Alex's response:

> Thanks. I can send the schedule and membership requirement by noon Central on March 4. I cannot promise three interviews: nobody has agreed to participate. I will ask whether anyone wants to speak independently and update you by the same deadline. Please do not plan around those interviews until confirmed.

Update the tracker to **interested—documents due March 4, noon Central**. Before any interview, use Chapter 2's ground-rules guidance. Do not share private member details to fill the gap.

Example resource handoff (use the fact-sheet text here for practice; add verified public links before real use):

> Hello, here are the checked details: the proposed Tuesday trial starts April 6, 6–8 p.m.; membership is required. The public opening-hours notice and membership rules support those points. No users have agreed to interviews, so those are unavailable. We have no trial attendance results yet. Please let me know if a factual clarification would help.

Example thank-you after the exchange:

> Thank you for examining the evening-access question. I appreciated the clear deadline for the background information. The promised information is delivered; no interviews are confirmed. I remain available for factual clarification.

Record **materials delivered—editorial decision unknown**, with no further chase scheduled. Keep the relationship warm by delivering an invited update if the schedule changes; otherwise, wait for a genuinely relevant new development. Interest and delivery do not promise coverage.

A Two-Week PR Sprint

Treat this as a suggested work sequence, not a promised timetable for coverage. Move dates to suit the audience's deadlines and your own capacity. Follow-up dates may fall beyond this sprint; use the toolkit plan only where appropriate.

Days 1–2: choose the purpose. Define your audience, useful story, and desired outcome. Assemble the starter kit. Check your claims and permissions.

Days 3–4: study one medium. Read its chapter. Find a small, focused group of appropriate contacts. Review their recent work and current submission instructions. Write down the specific reason each is a fit.

Days 5–6: make the approaches. Draft a tailored message for each good fit. Read it aloud, shorten the self-congratulation, check the facts, and send it through the proper route. Record what you sent.

Days 7–8: prepare to be useful. Practice answers, collect supporting material, and make sure your demonstration or proposed contribution works. Respond promptly to interested contacts within the timeline they request.

Days 9–10: review follow-up. Separate interest, redirects, "not now," explicit declines, and silence. Use recipient rules and actual dates to decide whether an optional reminder is appropriate; new facts are helpful, not required. Review the tracker without assuming a reminder is due today. Close approaches that should end.

Days 11–12: deliver and maintain. Send promised assets, confirm logistics, thank people specifically, and close the loop on introductions. Share published work accurately without suggesting endorsement that was never given.

Days 13–14: learn. Review useful replies and outcomes against your original goal. What was relevant? What was unclear? Which audience fit was strongest? Change one meaningful part of the next

attempt. Keep doing the work that makes your story worth telling.

The Last Page — Keep the Door Open

Good PR has a pleasantly unglamorous center: listening, preparation, useful ideas, and follow-through. The microphone, byline, stage, or camera is the visible moment. The relationship is the work around it.

Start small enough to pay attention. Write an introduction that sounds like a person. Offer an angle that belongs with that audience. Know your facts. Answer the question. Respect the answer. Say thank you without making it a transaction.

You do not have to become everyone's favorite person. Become someone the right people can trust to be relevant, clear, and dependable. There is room for personality in that. There is room for humor, style, confidence, and a little sparkle in your voice. Just give the personality a useful job to do.

Pick one chapter. Complete its immediate task. Then make the next thoughtful approach.

Your first good call begins before the phone rings.

About the Authors

Julie Scoops focuses on practical public relations, media outreach, and the relationships behind useful exposure. This guide brings those skills into a repeatable process readers can use for their own projects.

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