



## Ten great ways to engage the media using social media



If you've ever taken a marketing course, you've probably learned about the importance of "earned media." Unlike paid media, such as ads, earned media is free exposure through the radio, newspaper or television, and it's crucially important to most organization's communications efforts.

However, unless you work for the Canucks, you have probably struggled to get the kind of earned media you desire. Your press releases go ignored; your cold calls go unanswered. With so many people knocking on the media's door wanting attention, how do you make your voice heard?

The answer: social media.

### **What you will find in Module 28:**

*10 great ways to engage the media using social media*

1. [Know your assets](#)
2. [Build relationships](#)
3. [Position yourself as an expert](#)
4. [Be first on the scene](#)
5. [Use a hashtag](#)
6. [Tweet a well-crafted pitch](#)
7. [Use proper etiquette](#)
8. [Pitch using multiple sources](#)
9. [Track your results](#)
10. [Say thank you](#)

## **1. Know your assets**

The first step to contacting any media is recognizing when you have a worthy story. If you want to earn a reputation as a good source, you need to be honest with yourself about whether your story is interesting to the public at large, or if it's just interesting to your organization.



Would you care about the story if it happened within another organization? If the answer is no, save the story for your website and social media.

In general, stories with an immediate 'hook' or 'peg' will have more traction than stories without, so try to tie your story in to a current event or larger media story. For example, your organization's new post-concussion return-to-play policy is probably not media-worthy in itself. But if the media is buzzing about concussions in the NHL, you could offer a new spin on that story by showing how other sports ensure their athletes' safety.

If you decide that your story is media-worthy, the next step is to zero in on what media would be interested. Will your story have success in the local media, provincial media or national media?

Remember: media outlets in small towns are often very receptive to content from Provincial Sports Organizations (PSOs).

## **2. Build relationships**

We've said time and time again in this social media toolkit that social media is just another form of relationship building. Journalists get dozens of pitches a day, so it's important to stand out by striking up a personal connection. Research what journalists are a good fit for your organization, then take time to comment on and retweet their work. You can even reach out to journalists who have covered your sport in the past to invite them out to an upcoming event. When it comes time to pitching a story, you won't be just another faceless Twitter handle.



## **3. Position yourself as an expert**



As a sport organization, you're qualified to speak about issues beyond the field of play. A reporter might consult you as an expert source on everything from how sports participation can combat childhood obesity to what to get for the sports fan in your life for Christmas. By tweeting to news outlets in response to their articles, you'll position yourself as an expert and increase the likelihood of becoming a journalist's go-to source in the future.

Remember: you don't need to limit your opinions to 140 characters. If your organization has a blog, use it to provide thoughtful commentary on current events related to your sport, then tweet the link to the journalists

## **4. Be first on the scene**

Over 80% of journalists use Twitter for breaking news. The faster you can tweet about a topic, the more likely a journalist will use you as a source.

## **5. Use a hashtag**

Journalists often track hashtags to gather sources. Make sure to use common hashtags when responding to current events.



## 6. Tweet a well-crafted pitch

 It's hard to get your message across in 140 characters or less, but it's a crucial part of getting a journalist's attention. If your tweet is confusing, grammatically incorrect, vague or generic, a journalist will quickly discard it. Remember to include a link at the end of your tweet to a website where the reporter can get more information.

For more information on how to write a good tweet, check out [Module 14 - Twitter 101 for sport organizations: your top 12 questions answered](#)

## 7. Use proper etiquette

Sometimes, marketers who use social media forget that there is a real person on the other end of the computer and as a result, common etiquette goes out the window. You wouldn't call up a reporter five times a day to ask if they're coming to your event, so you shouldn't send out a barrage of tweets much in the same manner. Send your pitch once or twice, then move on if the journalist doesn't respond.

## 8. Pitch using multiple sources

Social media is an effective way to reach the media, but it shouldn't be your only method. Enhance your online efforts with more traditional pitching methods such as cold calling, issuing press releases and using press release aggregators such as [SIRC](#).



## 9. Track your results

To refine your approach, track how much media engagement each story pitch received. How many journalists picked up the story? How many people visited your website via the link in your tweet? What types of stories got the most media attention?

## 10. Say thank you



Over 80% of journalists said that they use social media to enhance their own reputation, so make sure to give them a boost by sharing the story they write on your organization on your social media channels. You should also thank the journalist.

Have a question about engaging the media via social media? Have a tip not listed here? Get in the conversation by contacting [arley@bcwheelchairsports.com](mailto:arley@bcwheelchairsports.com) or tweeting [@ViaSport\\_](https://twitter.com/ViaSport_). To learn more, check out our Social Media Toolkit, found [here](#).



---

Click this button to download the toolkit as a PDF:

[Download PDF](#)

---

**Source URL:**

<https://www.viasport.ca/social-media-toolkit/ten-great-ways-to-engage-the-media-using-social-media>