

5 tips to help you contact journalists through social media

Are you an entrepreneur? Maddyne has compiled a toolkit to help you create, grow, and even sell your own startup. From recruiting a team and protecting your brand to financing your innovation, you will find tips, tools and advice to help you navigate the entrepreneurship labyrinth. Among the many social media sites that exist on the web, it is difficult to find and decide what is the best way to contact the right journalists. Here are some of the best ways to go about it as a rookie entrepreneur.

For several years now, public relations (or should we call it public influencers now?) aren't limited to the classic ways of contact any more. Traditionally, a press secretary could send countless phone calls and emails on behalf of their clients. Nowadays, it's very common to go on social media to make the first contact with journalists and influencers. However, among the many social media sites that exist on the web, it is difficult to find and decide what is the best way to contact journalists according to their profiles. Here are some of the

best ways to go about it as a rookie entrepreneur

Clarify who you are

Keep in mind that there is a good chance that the journalists who you contact don't know you. Neither you nor your business. As a rule of thumb, it's best if you introduce yourself with your own name, and not the name of your business. In doing so, your message will come off as more personalised. Pay a lot of attention to your biography/introduction: this has to clearly explain your role in the company and what sector you are in. In the blink of an eye, the person who you're speaking to needs to understand who you are and have an idea who you are professionally.

Learn about the person who you are contacting before initially reaching out

In regard to your digital strategy, you won't be using the same social media as your neighbour. In the same manner, journalists, according to their line of business, won't have an account on all the same platforms as their colleagues. Some will be very active on Instagram (generally journalists who work for mainstream media) while others prefer to use Twitter. Let's not forget LinkedIn (as well as Facebook because some journalists have public profiles!).

It's important to learn about the person you are contacting in advance: what does their biography say? Is their profile public or private? What type of posts do they share? When was their last post? Do they respond to comments or requests? Is it possible to send them a private message? Did they put their email address on their profile? The more you know about them, the more targeted, efficient, and relevant your first message will be.

Be careful about how you contact them, according to which social media you use

It's a question of adapting. You won't use the same methods of communication on each social media site. Here are several pieces of advice to make your communication better.

On Twitter: you don't have much of a choice! Since the number of characters is limited, your pitch has to be precise and make the person want to respond. Clearly explain why you are contacting them, show that you know them, and

don't be afraid to add hashtags (without using too many). An example?
"@Name, hello, can we talk in DM, please? Subject #pollution #diesel to suggest an article to you for 20th March. Thank you!" *Variation: you can contact them directly with a DM if this option is activated on their account.*

On Facebook: there are several options. Either you know the journalist well and you are friends on social media, which is helpful for starting a relationship, or the journalist has a professional profile on Facebook and shares news, articles and reports. If it is the latter, use a professional tone and quickly pitch your words in a private message. Don't overload them with information! Again, they should immediately understand why you're reaching out to them. The advantage of Facebook is that you can see if the other person has read your message or not.

On Instagram: normally the journalists that you can find on Instagram work with mainstream subjects (a lot about lifestyle). This site will only be useful to you if you are working with these types of subjects. Be careful, once again, to study the profile before sending a message. Certain journalists only have a private Instagram account and don't appreciate being sent messages for professional reasons. If it's practical, send a private message and make it clear that you are contacting them via Instagram because you follow their posts and think that they would like your subject. Also, ask if they want to continue talking on Instagram or by email. This initial contact will allow you to introduce yourself without being too intrusive.

On LinkedIn: this is the perfect professional social media platform. However, it could also be a double-edged sword because they can easily get a lot of messages... If you are still not connected, send them an invitation with a message briefly explaining your objective in contacting them and the benefit that they would receive in becoming part of your network. If the person accepts and even better responds, you'll know that your message hit the mark and you can then start to get to know them.

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Try not to "mass contact"

It is important to understand that personalisation is key It's better to do private messages, but when the messages are posted publicly, you should try to avoid

a series of messages!

Let's take the example from Twitter: if you'd like to introduce yourself to several journalists who might be interested in your information, don't contact them all one after another, and especially not in the same message. Limit yourself to contact one or two per day (with several tweets in between) so that your wall isn't filled with request messages. You have to know how to communicate sparingly.

Another piece of advice: journalists like it when you offer them exclusive content, which makes sense! Don't hesitate to propose a particular angle (that you haven't suggested to anyone else) or even better, an exclusive story or a preview.

No response? Don't insist and take it on the chin

If you don't receive a response within a couple of hours or days, don't panic. There are several reasons for this: either the information didn't interest the journalist and they didn't want to follow it up, or they didn't see your message. Or they could have seen the message but put it aside. Several days (or weeks) later, remember to reach out to them in other ways, for example by email or a classic phone call.

Another option: if the person follows you on social media, continue to post regularly about news that is in their line of media. You might catch their attention indirectly. Whatever happens, don't harass them: this is the best way to get yourself blacklisted.

One last piece of advice before you hit the road: in public relations, you must be patient. If the topic really interests a journalist, they will contact you sooner or later!

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