

Pitch & Press Release Checklist

Run every pitch or press release through this before you hit send. Pairs with the full guide: *How to Write a Pitch and Press Release Journalists Actually Open*.

STEP 1 · DECIDE: PITCH OR PRESS RELEASE?

- ☐ Asked: would this be newsworthy with the brand name removed?
- ☐ If no — defaulted to a short pitch, not a formal release
- ☐ If yes — confirmed it's a real news moment (funding, launch, data study, leadership change, verified first/milestone)

STEP 2 · SUBJECT LINE

- ☐ Leads with the story or data point, not the brand name
- ☐ Avoids generic phrases like “Partnership opportunity” or “Press Release: ...”
- ☐ Would still make sense with the brand name deleted from it

STEP 3 · OPENING LINE

- ☐ References something specific the journalist already wrote or covered
- ☐ Skips generic greetings (“I hope this finds you well”)
- ☐ Proves in one sentence that this isn't a mail-merge

STEP 4 · BODY

- ☐ Contains exactly one idea, not a full company overview
- ☐ Structured as: hook → relevance to their beat → one clear ask
- ☐ Stays under ~150 words — no scrolling required

STEP 5 · CLOSE

- ☐ Makes “yes” the easiest possible response (specific next step offered)
- ☐ Avoids vague closers like “let me know your thoughts”
- ☐ Signed with name and a one-line title only

IF WRITING A PRESS RELEASE

- ☐ Headline states the news plainly — no hype adjectives
- ☐ Dateline included (city, date)
- ☐ Lede paragraph carries the full core news in 2–3 sentences
- ☐ Quote sounds like a real person, not legal-approved copy
- ☐ Boilerplate “About” paragraph is short and standardized
- ☐ Real name, email, and phone number included in contact info

BEFORE YOU HIT SEND

- ☐ Pitch is pasted in the email body — not sent as a cold attachment
- ☐ Sent to one journalist only — never CC'd across multiple reporters
- ☐ Checked that this exact angle hasn't already been covered everywhere
- ☐ Follow-up plan set: one follow-up after 4–5 business days, with something new added — then move on if there's no reply