

10 Tips for working with the logistics trade media

HOW

do you get reporters and editors to read your news releases, accept your pitches for articles, and interview your people as industry experts?

You can do it, if you're ready to build a foundation of strong relationships with the publications that reach your target audience.

Here are some tips taken from a 2016 media survey conducted by the Transportation Marketing and Sales Association (TMSA), and an informative [webinar](#) presented by Bill Fahrenwald of James Street Associates and William Vantuono, editor of *Railway Age*.

1 Why Do I Need the Trade Media?

Credibility is the most important reason to put your message in the "traditional media" of trade magazines and newsletters. Both print and digital publications provide the substance and established trust needed for effective business-to-business communications.

A 2016 [study](#) conducted by the respected University of Chicago National Opinion Research Center found that information in magazines is mostly—or completely—trusted by 81 percent of adults. In contrast, social media is trusted by 53 percent, and blogs by 55 percent.



2 Connecting With the Right Audience

This is a no-brainer: Trade publications have already found your audience!

Look at a publication's audited circulation statement, which usually can be found online. It verifies that it is received by readers who requested it. And, it usually details who those readers are.

One popular logistics publication reaches some 70,000 readers who are carefully qualified. Those readers are identified by company category, title, and buying responsibility. Included in its circulation analysis is the fact that it is read by 4,059 executives with logistics and supply chain decision-making responsibility in Consumer Goods Manufacturing. If that's who you are trying to reach...bingo!





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3 The 13% Hurdle

About 40 percent of story pitches submitted via the preferred method—email—are opened by editors. Of those opened, about 33 percent result in some type of published coverage for a “success” rate of around 13 percent.

4 Developing Your Go-To List

Target your media relations efforts where they will do you the most good. First, what publications cover your specific market? Check the circulation statements, and rank them by the number of people they reach in your target audience.

What have they published over the past year? Do those articles reflect topics of interest to your customers? Would your executives have something to add to the conversation on those subjects?

Last—but not least—do a Google News search on your competitors and find out which publications are covering them. That’s where you want to be, too.

Once you know your key publications, check their websites to find out names and contact info for editors and reporters who specialize in covering your area of expertise.

5 Know What They Publish

Being relevant is critical when you contact an editor. And, you can’t be relevant to a publication unless you know what the editor wants.

The majority of publications produce an editorial calendar that lists themes and topic areas they will be covering in the coming months. This is where you want to target your pitches.

Look to see if their own staff writes most of the publication’s articles. Do they appear to accept contributed articles from industry experts? Do they seem to print many news releases? If so, are the news releases wide-ranging or just focused on a limited area such as new products?



6 What They Need From You

Editors want accurate, factual information that is not self-serving.

For example, you checked the editorial calendar for a magazine on your go-to list, and see there will be a cover article next November about less-than-truckload deliveries to distribution centers. What do people in your company know about this? Do you have examples of ways your company or its clients have improved this process?

Plan to contact the editors by email about two months—or even three—prior to publication. Succinctly tell them what non-promotional information the people in your company have to share. Also, offer up any real-world examples of challenges and solutions on this topic.

People in the logistics business love to hear about how their peers—your customers—solved their problems. So tell that story whenever you can, and position your company in a supporting—not leading—role.

7 How To Deliver It

About half of the editors surveyed indicated they would only open attachments that are from a trusted source. So, it's important to include all critical information in the email body. If you send a news release as an attachment, you should also include its text in the body of the email. Some magazines now have a self-serve area on their websites where you can upload your company's news.

Also, inform editors if you have photos that would go with the article, and be prepared to send them in high-resolution sizes.

8 Cut Through the Clutter

Most editors receive more than 50 news releases daily. A significant number have to deal with more than 200 news releases every day. Only about half of all news releases are read, and the majority of the TMSA survey respondents said they use less than 10 percent of the news releases they read.



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In other words, only about 5 percent of all news releases received are published.

Cut through that clutter by covering the basic requirements of journalism: who, what, where, when, why, and how. Be brief and be sure to state clearly what's in it for the reader. If you don't, the editor won't bother to figure it out.



9 Developing Trust

Editors and reporters are busy people always on a deadline, but it's to your mutual advantage to develop a strong working relationship. Stay in touch via regular emails containing useful information. Visit with the trade press at industry conferences and events. Invite them to tour your facilities, or meet up at their offices to share news.

Keep up your end of the relationship. In the TMSA study, most of the editors ranked "proven reliable source of useful/non-promotional information" as the trait they value most in their sources. A consistent flow of good information will keep you top-of-mind with your most important media outlets.

10 Don't Do This...

Don't miss deadlines

Don't be self-promotional or make baseless claims

Don't neglect to be relevant to each publication

Don't overwhelm with pitches, releases, or emails

Don't knowingly provide inaccurate information—correct any mistakes immediately

Don't ever give the same story to two competing publications



DIY Reporting

Here's a nifty fact. Most publications will accept an article that you write.

But be aware that such an article needs to meet all the criteria outlined in the 10 tips:

- ✓ Non-promotional
- ✓ Solves a business problem for the readers
- ✓ Objective
- ✓ Well written

Most of all, it should use the perspective of: Here's an issue we frequently run across in logistics, and here's how you can solve it.

NOT—Here's how we can solve it for you.

About James Street Associates

James Street is a marketing communications agency focused exclusively on transportation, logistics, warehousing and supply chain clients. The team at James Street is well-versed in the history of these critical industries and the breathtaking metamorphosis advancing behind the scenes every day.

Editors in the trade press respect James Street's clients, who have become trusted go-to subject-matter experts in their fields.

Media programs developed and administered by James Street focus on its clients' audience—what publications they read and which topics will most likely capture their attention.

Content generated by the James Street is rich fodder for blogs, social media posts, story pitches and ad copy. The James Street team keeps a tight rein on messaging and brand consistency.

