

## WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

### 1. DEVELOPING A PITCH

In public and media relations, a pitch is simply another term for a story idea you intend to “pitch” to reporters or editors for media coverage. Often, it will be a press release.

When developing a pitch, consider both the facts and the *impact* of the facts.

For example, the Billings Chamber of Commerce and its partners recently secured a new daily direct flight from Dallas to Billings through American Airlines. Those are the facts. But the story is that this flight will open access to a major hub in the South from which potential visitors may reach Montana more easily.

Reporters or editors who receive your pitch will evaluate it to determine whether it’s newsworthy. They may consider a variety of factors, but some of the biggest will be: timeliness, significance, proximity, prominence, and human interest.

*If you have something you think may be of interest to a statewide audience, let us know!*

### 2. WRITING A PRESS RELEASE

A press release should read like a news article, because ultimately that’s what you hope it will become. Start with something to catch the reader’s attention, then place the most important information (who, what, why, where, when) toward the beginning, add a quote, and fill in with detail.

Distribute the press release to the people most likely to be interested. For larger media outlets, there may be staff dedicated to tourism- and recreation-related topics.

If you’re pitching something time-sensitive, be aware of deadlines—especially for small, weekly newspapers. If you miss a deadline, you might have to wait a week until the next opportunity to get something printed, and by then it might be too late.

It doesn’t hurt to follow up on a press release with a phone call or an e-mail.

### 3. DOING AN INTERVIEW

If a reporter contacts you in response to a press release, then you’ve successfully pitched the story. Prepare for the interview by developing key talking points to guide you. If the interview is being recorded for broadcast, it will most likely be edited and split into smaller chunks—so don’t worry if you stumble and have to repeat something. Most reporters will give you an opportunity at the end of the interview to share any other thoughts or speak to things you didn’t get asked about.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

See an archive of MOTBD’s press releases at [MarketMT.com/News](http://MarketMT.com/News).

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