

lollipop pr library: contacting the media

- Draw up a Hotlist of 20 journalists or editors by identifying your niche and focussing on it. Select from small local titles and industry specific titles at first: Where is your message most relevant? National editors often get their stories from local press. Focus your efforts on this niche: 20 contacts is plenty, after all you need to build a deep, meaningful relationship with each one
- Make sure you read the publication, or listen to/watch the programme.
- The first time you call, introduce yourself and ask whether it is a good time, or if it would be better for you to call another time.
- Once you have them listening ask about their deadlines - when do they go to press, when would they like to be contacted.
- Ask what kind of stories they are interested in - and listen. focus on establishing yourself as an expert in a particular field. Try to pitch yourself as a 'Talking Head', an expert in your field. Someone editors trust to turn to for an opinion or soundbite. If you can help flesh out a journalist's stories when they need fleshing out, you're more likely to get a receptive response to your new product launch
- Make sure you get their direct phone line if they have one, their email address and
- Invite them to any event your organisation might have - once you meet face to face they are more likely to remember you.
- You are not going to get every story you suggest into the publication. Don't take it personally! Remember the factors competing for their attention:
 - Volume: Journalists are sent huge numbers of press releases most of which are irrelevant and go straight in the bin.
 - Time: Journalists will be worrying about their deadlines, their editors, and their colleagues - sometimes they might have to compete for space.
 - Luck: The journalist may just be in a good mood, have an interest in your kind of organisation for personal reasons, or they may not be as busy as usual.