

**Business Support Guides**

# **‘Introduction To PR’ Toolkit**

Helping small and medium-sized tourism businesses boost their PR and marketing

# Introduction

Intended for managers or employees at English, tourism-focused SMEs (small or medium-sized enterprises) who are not marketing professionals, this PR Toolkit advises you on how to secure media coverage in a time-efficient manner.

It divides into four main sections: **who** to contact, **what** exactly to say, **how** best to say it and **when** to say it. Two additional sections then cover the incorporation of social media and 'influencers', plus suggestions on how best to evaluate or measure your PR campaign.

Included throughout are case studies from SMEs who have successfully scored media coverage without spending lots of time or money.

Remember that coverage rarely ensues organically: instead, it pays to be proactive, and to tell the right journalists why they should cover your business. Good luck!



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“To me, the best PR pitches are the ones which ‘get’ the publication and the readership, sum up the idea in a snappy subject header and then expand – briefly! – on the idea in a subsequent paragraph. They’ll explain why it’s newsy, and why it is a great fit for Metro.”

- Laura Millar,

Travel Editor of Metro

# Who?

Here is an overview of the UK's many media outlets which produce travel content:

Type	Examples	Audience	Best contact
National broadsheet newspaper	The Times, The Guardian, Daily Mail	Readers with money to spend, generally 30+	Deputy Travel Editor (if one) or Travel Editor
National broadsheet website	<a href="http://theguardian.com/travel">theguardian.com/travel</a> , <a href="http://telegraph.co.uk/travel">telegraph.co.uk/travel</a>	Readers with money to spend, usually more millennial than the print version	Digital Travel Editor
National tabloid newspaper	The Sun, The Daily Mirror	A wide readership and price range, with luxury less likely to feature	Travel Editor NB: The Express, Mirror and Star share editors
Regional newspaper (see below)	Evening Standard, Liverpool Daily Post	A wide readership and price range	Travel or Features Editor
Regional magazine (see below)	Cornwall Life, Midlands Living, Round & About	Visiting tourists, local residents	Features or News Editor
Travel magazine	Wanderlust, Suitcase, Condé Nast Traveller, Coast	Regular, affluent or niche (e.g. adventure) travellers	Features Editor or Editorial Assistant
Lifestyle magazine	Psychologies, Prima, Sainsbury's Magazine, Absolutely Mama	A wide range aged 30+, foodies, mothers, etc	Travel (if one) or Features Editor
Other niche-sector magazine	Horse & Rider, Cyclist, Breathe, The World of Interiors	Hobbyists or devotees of a specific activity, art, science or practice	Features (if one) or News Editor
Travel-trade magazine	Travel Trade Gazette, Travel Weekly	Travel agents (including shops and online)	Deputy News Editor
Travel website	<a href="http://Adventure.com">Adventure.com</a> , <a href="http://MummyTravels.com">Mummy Travels</a> , <a href="http://LoveExploring.com">LoveExploring</a>	Avid travellers or niche travellers	Features Editor (if one) or Editor
Lifestyle website	<a href="http://Stylist.co.uk">Stylist.co.uk</a> , <a href="http://MarieClaire.co.uk">MarieClaire.co.uk</a>	A wide readership, typically more millennial	Travel (if one) or Features Editor

Type	Examples	Audience	Best contact
National radio show	Traveller's Tree (BBC Radio 4)	Affluent, mostly 50+, plus aged 35-54	Series Producer
Regional radio station	Island FM, Radio Borders, Lincs FM	Affluent, mostly 50+ local residents	News team
Travel podcast	<a href="#">The Carry On</a> , <a href="#">Footnotes</a> (Cicerone)	Travel fanatics of all ages, sometimes niche	Usually the podcasters
Travel TV show	BBC World Service's The Travel Show	Travel fanatics, usually 50+ and affluent	Series Producer
Local TV channel	BBC London, BBC East Midlands	Local residents, usually aged 40+	News Editor

## Regional newspapers

As this is such a practical target area, we've listed the main regional newspaper publishers – although please be aware that this isn't an exhaustive list, and some of your biggest local papers may be published by other companies:

Media Group	Examples of Titles	Website
Reach (formerly Trinity Mirror)	Manchester Evening News, Liverpool Echo, Daily Post (Wales), Birmingham Mail	<a href="https://reachplc.com/our-newsbrands">reachplc.com/our-newsbrands</a>
Newsquest	Dorset Echo, In Cumbria, The Argus, Oxford Mail	<a href="https://newsquest.co.uk/news-brands">newsquest.co.uk/news-brands</a>
JPI Media (formerly Johnston Press); owned by National World	Lancashire Evening Post, Sunderland Echo, The (Sheffield) Star	<a href="https://jpimedia.co.uk/newsbrands">jpimedia.co.uk/newsbrands</a>
Archant	Eastern Daily Press, Ham & High, North Devon Gazette	<a href="https://archant.co.uk/news-brands">archant.co.uk/news-brands</a>
Midland News Association (MNA)	Express & Star, Shropshire Star, Shrewsbury Chronicle	<a href="https://mnamedia.co.uk/news-titles">mnamedia.co.uk/news-titles</a>
Tindle Newspapers	Cornish Times, Surrey & Hants News, Island FM radio station	<a href="https://tindlenews.co.uk/brands">tindlenews.co.uk/brands</a>

## Regional magazines

Media Group	Examples of Titles	Website
Archant	The Life (e.g. Cornwall Life) and Resident (e.g. Suffolk Resident) titles	<a href="http://archant.co.uk/magazines">archant.co.uk/magazines</a>
Newsquest	The Living (e.g. Hampshire Living) and retirement-lifestyle Prime series	<a href="http://living-magazines.co.uk">living-magazines.co.uk</a> <a href="http://prime-magazine.co.uk">prime-magazine.co.uk</a>
Midland News Association (MNA)	Select Magazine, Shropshire Magazine, Gourmet Shropshire	<a href="http://mnamedia.co.uk/magazine-titles">mnamedia.co.uk/magazine-titles</a>
Other smaller/ independent publishers (print)	Pride Magazines, Lincolnshire	<a href="http://pridemagazines.co.uk">pridemagazines.co.uk</a>
	Engine House Media, Cornwall	<a href="http://enginehousemedia.co.uk">enginehousemedia.co.uk</a>
	Loop, Yorkshire & Lancashire	<a href="http://looppublishing.co.uk">looppublishing.co.uk</a>
	RMC Media, Yorkshire	<a href="http://rmcmedia.co.uk">rmcmedia.co.uk</a>
	Dalesman, Yorkshire	<a href="http://dalesman.co.uk">dalesman.co.uk</a>
	Round & About, southern England	<a href="http://roundandabout.co.uk">roundandabout.co.uk</a>
Other regional lifestyle magazines (online)	Index Digital, SE England	<a href="http://indexdigital.co.uk">indexdigital.co.uk</a>
	Viva, Manchester	<a href="http://vivamanchester.co.uk">vivamanchester.co.uk</a>

Find as many local magazines as you can and trawl the staff page to see who publishes it, and their contact details.

# Choosing targets

That's a lot of options, right? True, but don't be overwhelmed; the important thing here is to select key targets – the ones key for you.

Which newspapers, magazines, podcasts, etc. might your typical customer – or the customer segment you want to reach – be likeliest to follow? Those are the ones you should target. Rather than trying a vague catch-all tack, make personalised approaches to five or ten relevant, viable outlets. This is likelier to succeed, and will take you less time.

Bear in mind that national newspapers and lifestyle magazines will be the fussiest (and most besieged!), so you'll need something truly compelling and unusual to interest them. But we'll discuss this later, in the **What?** section.

## Useful links:

- [newsworks.org.uk](http://newsworks.org.uk) lists the latest circulation figures of national newspapers, plus details of their readership. Use the search function to find the one you want
- [abc.org.uk](http://abc.org.uk) does the same, also covering many magazines and websites
- [media.info/radio](http://media.info/radio) has useful radio-station statistics, including local stations

## Top Tips: Tracking down contacts

1. Google the name of an outlet plus the relevant job title – i.e. ["The Times" + "Travel Editor"]. Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram can then help you check whether this is up to date
2. To get an email address, phone the outlet's switchboard and ask nicely. Note that you may simply be connected, so have your idea ready to pitch orally (see the **What?** section)
3. If your budget allows, subscribe to a media database (e.g. Roxhill, Cision, Gorkana) – or seek out a free trial. Some of these also offer a cuttings service monitoring the UK media for coverage about you.
4. Are there travel writers who regularly cover stories about your specialism (e.g. a family-travel specialist)? If so, try them. They'll likely be a freelancer whose website lists their email address
5. Your local Destination Organisation (DO) may have regional contacts. Their details can be found at [visitbritain.org/business-advice/find-local-support](http://visitbritain.org/business-advice/find-local-support)



# Case Study #1

Alison Goodwin, owner, Adventures for the Soul

[adventuresforthesoul.co.uk](http://adventuresforthesoul.co.uk)

**Back to nature yoga, walking and dark sky experiences helping guests to restore, reconnect and rewild in the North York Moors and beyond.**

**What I do:** During winter there was a lot of press interest, so I spent around four hours a week on PR – perhaps updating DMOs on our upcoming activities, doing local-radio interviews or fine-tuning journalist visits.

**Best results:** We had a flurry of national and regional coverage for our Dark Sky events: everything from the Scarborough Evening News to the The Times' travel section via magazines such as BBC Sky at Night.

**The effects:** It can be difficult gauging whether interest comes directly or indirectly from press coverage. But one stand-out piece – a Good Housekeeping profile about my being a woman who loves walking, and who started her own firm – definitely brought in 100 newsletter subscribers. We've also gained many subscribers ever since I began adding logos of titles in which we've featured to the website.



# What?

## Knowing your story

“What’s the hook?” That’s a common question travel editors ask when they’re offered a story. A hook (AKA ‘peg’ or ‘angle’) is what makes a story idea newsworthy and noteworthy.

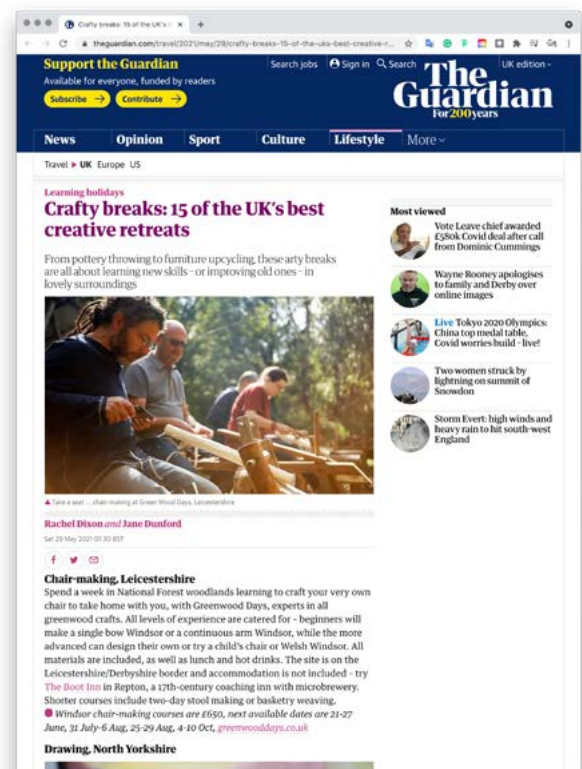
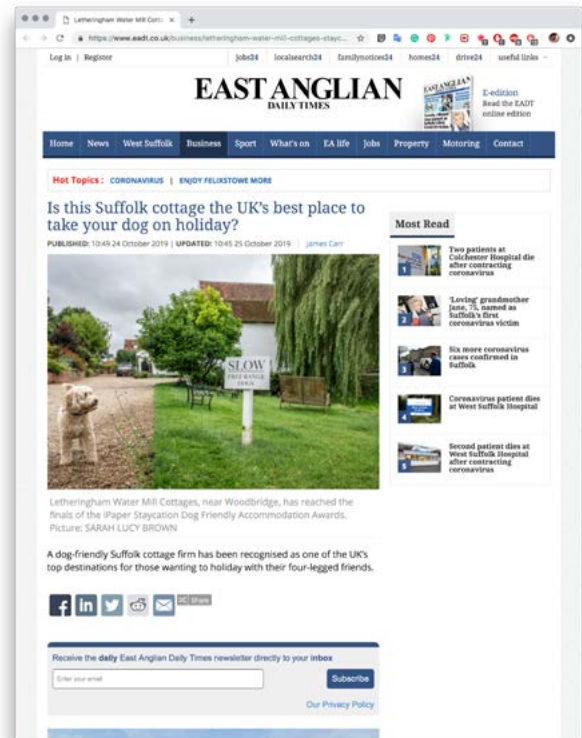
As an illustration, consider Las Vegas. If a big casino-hotel opens on the Strip it will be newsworthy by dint of being new. But it won’t be very noteworthy: there are already tens of places just like it. Equally, if there was a women’s-only casino-hotel which had been open for 34 years, that would be noteworthy (by being unique) but not newsworthy, as it wouldn’t be new.

But if a new, women’s-only casino-hotel opens? Now that would be a hook.

To ascertain your hook, consider what is unique about you or your product? Above all, that’s what a Travel Editor or Series Producer wants to know. What separates your business from your competitors? What are you doing differently? What is your newest offering?

Concentrating on these questions will give you the best odds of scoring precious coverage.

Now you know what to say, the **How?** section (starting on page 12) will tell you how to say it...





# Local, national or international?

Local press – newspapers, magazines, radio stations – are the likeliest to give you publicity, simply because you'll have to do less to stand out.

That publicity may simply be a short news story, or an in-depth feature or report. Again, specifying your hook will up your chances. “Company A does X and Y” isn't as good as “Company A's newest/most unique product is X and Y”.

National coverage is usually more desirable. The reader numbers will be bigger, and you'll be reaching potential clients from further afield who are less likely to know about you. Bear in mind, however, that national travel editors receive thousands of approaches per week – so getting noticed (or even getting heard) is much harder.

Consider also targeting international titles. Is there a country or overseas regional market from which you consistently earn good feedback? If so, investigate their major travel-focused media and - if they seem a good fit - get in touch. Reaching Chinese travellers, for instance, usually involves the WeChat app, while many North American newspapers – the New York Times, Canada's Globe & Mail, the San Francisco Chronicle – have lauded travel sections.

Your best chance in all cases? Work out your USPs, as above, and then follow our **How?** section...



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## Useful links:

- [www.visitbritain.org/markets-segments](http://www.visitbritain.org/markets-segments) has useful detail on Britain's most important inbound tourism markets and visitor characteristics
- [innovateuk.blog.gov.uk/2016/10/12/define-your-usp](http://innovateuk.blog.gov.uk/2016/10/12/define-your-usp) has digestible, general tips on ascertaining your USPs
- [wanderlust.co.uk/content/5-tips-for-pitching-your-article-to-magazines](http://wanderlust.co.uk/content/5-tips-for-pitching-your-article-to-magazines) – advice from Lyn Hughes, the Travel Editor of Wanderlust magazine
- [guide.saferoutesinfo.org/media/identify\\_hook.cfm](http://guide.saferoutesinfo.org/media/identify_hook.cfm) is a deep-dive in what makes a hook

# What can you offer?

Some editors or producers may request to send themselves or a reporter to sample your wares, promising a big story or feature. Typically they'll expect this to be provided for free in exchange for the publicity.

Can you afford this? If so, then it will probably be worthwhile – the bigger the coverage, the better the impact. You'll never be given a promise of when coverage will come out, but you can request specifics regarding the story's length or (if radio/TV) duration.

If you can't afford this, it's totally okay to say as much. Just confess that you're a small business and that, as much as you'd love to, you can't provide complimentary stays or experiences at present.

Ideally, be clear in your initial pitch – at the end, briefly – about what you can or can't offer.

## Top Tips: Supporting materials

1. Good photographs give you a far greater chance of publicity
2. They should be high-resolution – anything over 300dpi
3. But you don't want to clog an editor's inbox with lots of large files! So paste one or two images amid your pitch (see the **How?** section) and then, ideally, paste a link to an online file-share folder (e.g. Dropbox) where you have saved the remainder
4. Also helpful are detailed PDFs about your product – perhaps ones usually sent to customers. Attach these (or stick them in the file-share folder) if relevant

“You'd be surprised how many PR pitches are commissioned on the basis of an excellent image, which can convey the essence of a story perfectly. Conversely, many great ideas are ditched because of a lack of good imagery.”

- Jane Knight,

freelance travel writer and  
ex-Travel Editor of The Times



## Case Study #2

Jacqui Gooding, owner, Letheringham Water Mill Cottages

[letheringhammill.co.uk](http://letheringhammill.co.uk)

**Four handsome, pet-friendly cottages around an historic watermill in rural Suffolk, overseen by Jacqui and half a dozen part-time staff.**

**What we do:** I have a PR agent who works closely with me. Not everyone will be able to find or afford PR support but I find it frees me up to concentrate on building our business, knowing that the promotion side of things is being taken care of. We also post most days across Facebook and Instagram and as a result we have a truly-engaged clientele which has helped considerably during our closed periods due to the pandemic.

**Best results:** Ten or so newspaper articles followed our VisitEngland Dog-Friendly Business Award – among them inclusion in Hello! Magazine's '10 of the best tourism destinations in England'. We regularly receive coverage from our local East Anglian Daily Times and county

or regional lifestyle magazines, plus from pet bloggers. We rarely advertise as we've found we have much more success with editorial or social media.

**The effects:** I find it is vital to shout about our media coverage. We post about it again and again, reminding our audience of what has been said about us. This keeps the hard-won coverage alive and relevant.

**Top tips:** I think professional photography is a MUST. Having fabulous high-resolution images ready to send makes a tremendous difference to our promotion.



# How?

Approaches can either be made by phone or email. Email is best: phone calls risk catching harried editors or producers at inconvenient times.

## 10 top tips for engaging pitches

The best writing is chatty, succinct and to-the-point. You aren't here to be lyrical – that's the journalist's job – but you do need to quickly capture attention. These tools help:

1. Have a strong, concise subject line – e.g. “Cornwall’s only owl sanctuary scores national award”, or “New for 2020: Sherwood Forest visitor centre earns national recognition” – and don't try to be clever, nor use puns.
2. Use questions in paragraphs. Why do so? Because it entices the reader to read on...
3. No preamble: mention your hook in the first line. An editor may just skim-read this line before making a decision.
4. Keep paragraphs and emails short: long tracts of text seem daunting to time-pressed readers (as above, some good photographs help here, too)
5. Use alliteration (successive words beginning with the same sounds) – such as (and because) “it puts pace in sentences, making them fleet, fluid and fetching”.
6. Some bold text or italics can look good – but too much risks making an email appear messy.
7. Put your contact details and succinct company details at the end, perhaps under ‘Notes for Editor’, so it's easy for an editor to glean more, or follow up.
8. Provide starting prices (or rack rates for a room) in the Notes to Editor section and briefly state what these include.
9. Your email can either just contain a press release, begin with a personal note above the release, or disguise the release amid a personal email. The latter two tacks are better, as they demonstrate more effort on your part. Whatever you do, never attach the press release; attachments are tedious for time-strapped editors to open.
10. The ideal length is about an A4 side, or 300-400 words. Any more constitutes waffle.

A suggested press-release template is provided on page 15.

# Q&A

## Q: What makes a good image?

A: Images should be over 300dpi and clear. They should be weather-appropriate (i.e. sunny for a beach). Above all, they should be appealing.

## Q: How do I choose the best?

A: Trust your instinct. Put two or three distinctive snaps in the email or press release, then make clear that more are available in an online file-share folder.

## Q: What about logos?

A: Editors are interested in your story, not in your logo. Unless asked, don't include these. You could always put one in that same file-share folder.

## Q: Should I hire a photographer?

A: This could be a terrific investment. To save money, consider hiring a student photographer.

## Q: How do I request photo credits?

A: If these are strictly necessary, make clear in parentheses after your online file-share folder link, and put 'Must credit: "XX"' in each image's filename, replacing 'XX' with the photographer's name. For more guidance, see [visitbritain.org/business-advice/tv-and-copyright-licences](http://visitbritain.org/business-advice/tv-and-copyright-licences).

## Useful links:

- [theguardian.com/small-business-network/2014/jul/14/how-to-write-press-release](http://theguardian.com/small-business-network/2014/jul/14/how-to-write-press-release) outlines many more digestible release-writing tips
- [help.dropbox.com/guide/individual/how-to-use-dropbox](http://help.dropbox.com/guide/individual/how-to-use-dropbox)
- [pexels.com](http://pexels.com), [pixabay.com](http://pixabay.com) and [unsplash.com](http://unsplash.com) contain free-to-use images. Ditto [images.google.com](http://images.google.com) – having made a search, specify 'Creative Commons licenses' under Tools and Usage Rights.
- [visitbritain.org/business-advice/market-your-business](http://visitbritain.org/business-advice/market-your-business) provides resources and guidance to market your business
- [visitbritainimages.com](http://visitbritainimages.com) provides editorial images for use by the tourism industry

# VisitEngland & VisitBritain marketing opportunities

The VisitEngland and VisitBritain (VE/VB) PR teams work with domestic and international media and influencers to tell England and Britain's stories through a programme of activity that includes media/influencer trips, media relations, events and content creation aligned to current target audiences and campaigns. This is supported by a digital Media Centre ([visitbritain.com/media](https://www.visitbritain.com/media)). Consider also sending any stories – plus images or videos – to [press@visitengland.org](mailto:press@visitengland.org) and [pressandpr@visitbritain.org](mailto:pressandpr@visitbritain.org) for possible wider publicity and integration across social and website content.

You should also monitor VE/VB's integrated, nationwide campaigns to see if they align with your product and there is potential to integrate

into your own activity. Check [visitbritain.org/campaigns-opportunities](https://www.visitbritain.org/campaigns-opportunities) for the latest toolkit.

Consider also signing up to our fortnightly industry newsletter via [visitbritain.org/newsletter-signup](https://www.visitbritain.org/newsletter-signup) for the latest news about market intelligence, partnership marketing opportunities or tourism events.

On the 'I Love Great Britain Community' Facebook group ([facebook.com/groups/LoveGBCommunity](https://www.facebook.com/groups/LoveGBCommunity)), global tourists share tips about UK places to see, stay and eat. You can join the group and share your local recommendations.



Below is a press-release template for the time-poor, with advice inside square brackets [like this]. If you opt to use a logo (see p12's Q&A), put it at the top to the right of the headline.

## **[To-the-point headline – announce the story and capture attention]**

[Sentence that further previews your story – declaring newness, novelty and location]

[Sentence that summarises your story and the hook]

[Two-sentence paragraph adding further, less-noteworthy details (By now you should have covered the who, what, when, where, and, why of your story)]

PASTE 2-3 HIGH-RESOLUTION IMAGES HERE

[Share supporting stats or research (e.g. a trend supporting your new product), and additional any other context a journalist might want. If your hook involves an anniversary or TV show and extra details might be useful to the journalist, put them here.]

“[pithy one-sentence quote from a company senior. Say something interesting – e.g. why you launched the product – rather than “We’re so excited...”. Reference relevant past milestones (were you the pioneers of this product?)],” comments [job title] [name].

Prices start from [put the experience costs (or a relevant price), then state what it includes. Specify if it's per-person. Include a phone number and short weblink]

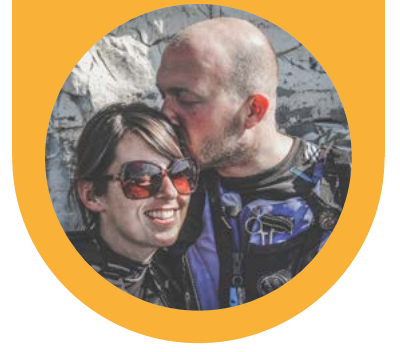
ENDS

[insert date of release], 2021

### **Notes to editors:**

- More images are available at [insert XXX link]
- Mention any recent award wins
- Please contact [your name] on [insert phone] or [email] for further information
- [INCLUDE ONLY IF RELEVANT:] Complimentary press-review experiences are possible dependent on the ensuring coverage

# Case Study #3



Jade and Dan Scott, co-owners, Fore/Adventure

[foreadventure.co.uk](http://foreadventure.co.uk)

**Aided by seven full-time staff in peak season, Jade and Dan provide outdoor experiences – from sea kayaking to forest foraging – from a peninsula along Dorset’s Jurassic Coast.**

**What we do:** Our PR work varies week to week. We regularly get approached by affiliate brands or media, and always respond. Working with TV crews can particularly take up time – filming ITV’s This Morning took an entire day, for example, plus lots of prep beforehand. Around these activities, we do social-media posts each week and produce monthly newsletters.

**Best results:** Coverage in travel and lifestyle magazines seems to be the most successful way for us to generate sales as the select readers fit our demographic. That said, we feel that any coverage that doesn’t directly influence sales remains beneficial by endorsing our business and keeping us in the public eye.

**The effects:** We’ll only work with media or bloggers who offer brand synergy, in order to gain the most from their pieces. It’s also important to publicise coverage, as this enables our current customers and followers to know our latest offerings and stay connected with us.

**Top tips:** We believe that whatever makes your product unique is your biggest selling point. Additionally, sharing your ethos and story helps to humanise a business, and to create a stronger connection with potential audiences.





# When?

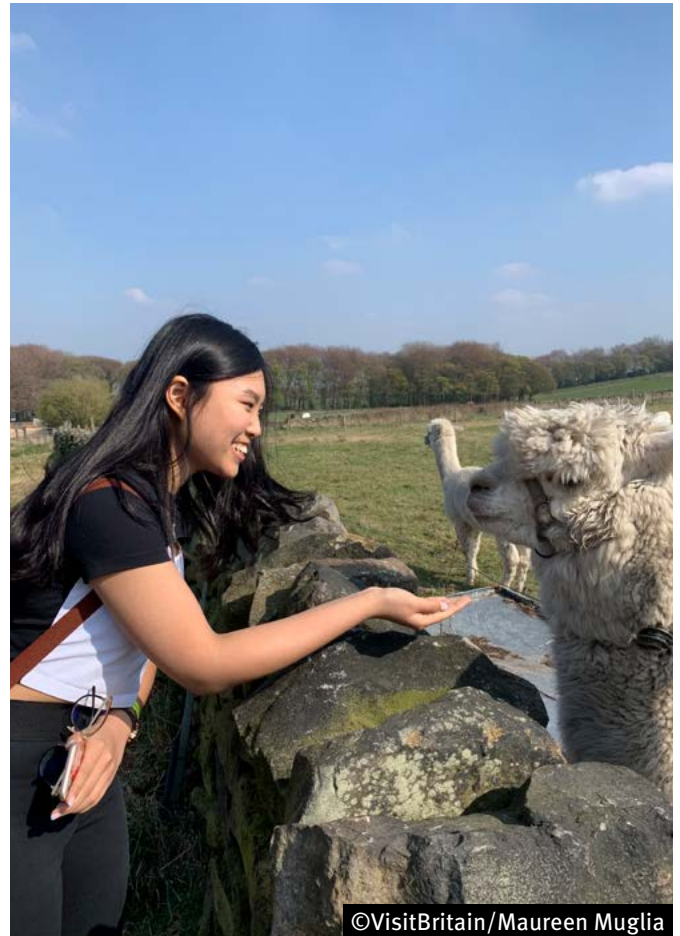
## When to make your approach

There is no exact science to this, only common sense. Just avoid Monday mornings – editors arrive to lots of emails – and that dead time known as Friday afternoon.

Although anything in-between is fine, Tuesday mid-morning might be the best time of all: most inboxes will be calm, and no-one yet has the sense of the week's time running out.

Most weekly travel sections produce their content about a week ahead, and often plan a month or two ahead. The same applies to radio shows and TV channels. So time-sensitive ideas based around an anniversary, film release or seasonality – i.e. outdoor pursuits – should be sent 3-6 months in advance of the relevant time for the best odds of success.

Monthly magazines' travel sections are written 3-6 months ahead of publication, with issues also coming out a few days ahead of their stated month (e.g a September issue published on August 29). So allow for even more advance notice if contacting a monthly magazine.



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“Ease is key. I need approaches to have all the information I require (dates, prices, links, images) and to leave enough time for me to research the story, pitch it and wait for editors’ response. Frustratingly, I often receive invitations or releases relating to events happening in just a couple of weeks. Ideally, these should be coming 3-4 months in advance.”

- **Lizzie Pook**  
freelance travel writer

# The art of chasing



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Sent a personal pitch to an editor or producer? You're perfectly entitled to follow it up should no response be received. You can couch this by citing a desire to make sure they received the email, or just be honest: say that you want to give them first dibs, but will – quite reasonably – otherwise take the idea elsewhere.

Whether to follow up an impersonal press release is more questionable. As before, it might well be that the editor has seen your release, not been smitten and deleted it; but you have less right to a reply if it wasn't sent personally.

Chase, and you risk only causing long-term annoyance. But that is more concerning for a PR professional: if such media contact is rare for you, then it's probably worth the risk.

Wait a week before chasing, unless you've reason for extra haste. Chase by email (never phone) with courtesy and not even a whiff of an accusatory tone. Reply to your initial email, and say something breezy like "I know you get 75,633 emails a day, but your readership fits our product so darn well that I'm following up to maximise my chances. Here's my idea again..."

## Useful links:

- [thefreelancersyear.com/blog/following-up-editors-guide](https://thefreelancersyear.com/blog/following-up-editors-guide) is intended for fellow freelance journalists, but equally useful from a PR perspective

# Best-practice evaluation of your PR efforts

It can be hard to know if PR is working or not, especially in these days of social media and multiple avenues of consumer communication.

**There are some qualitative metrics which you can use to evaluate the efficacy of your efforts:**

If your budget allows, create a vanity URL solely for your marketing use, and monitor it. See [ideasmoneyart.com/blog/how-to-create-and-track-vanity-urls-using-google-analytics](https://ideasmoneyart.com/blog/how-to-create-and-track-vanity-urls-using-google-analytics) for precise advice on how to do this.

- Alternatively, create a special webpage and promote this only via your marketing; while Google will catch on, it will be revealing if this page immediately begins performing well.
- Similarly, use Google Analytics or a similar tool to monitor traffic, including the pages and search terms leading visitors to your website.
- As covered on page 5, some media databases such as Cision or Gorkana also offer cuttings services monitoring the UK or international media for coverage about you.
- Simply ask most new customers how they heard about you. Often they'll be unsure, but it should equally become clear if a campaign or piece of coverage is delivering strongly for you.
- Decide on some key messaging – words or phrases that sum up your brand – and use these across all campaigns (including as hashtags and in press releases). Then assess how well each is performing in customer enquiries, digital analytics and press coverage.

## **Don't let AVE 'ave you on**

Historically, PR agencies have been fond of using a metric known as AVE, or advertising-value equivalent – assessing how much any editorial coverage about you would have cost if booked as advertising. This is inefficient because advertising rates are actually very fluid, but more so as it fails to consider the quality, relevance or impact of the coverage.

If you employ a PR firm, try to agree on a more realistic metric – or simply ask them to concentrate all their efforts on a few chosen publications.

# Social-media support

Social media can ably support your PR efforts. The trick is to use consistent, key messaging to cut through the crowded digital landscape – while always keeping your tone upbeat and timely/relevant.

The simplest way to integrate social media into a PR campaign involves adding social sharing capabilities to every press release and webpage. This allows both readers and journalists to immediately re-distribute or champion your message digitally.

Hashtags can be an excellent tool for public relations. If you've a single key phrase or word (e.g VisitEngland/VisitBritain's #EscapetheEveryday campaign), start using its hashtag version on your social-media pages, and include it in press releases. Not only does this enable wider sharing and the chance to gain traction, but it'll let you assess how the campaign is performing.

Additionally, social platforms are great for sharing positive media coverage as well – doing so will enhance your credibility. Take care not to overdo this, however, or to appear arrogant.

For further guidance, read the social media section in VisitEngland's Digital Marketing Toolkit ([www.visitengland.org/onlinemarketing](http://www.visitengland.org/onlinemarketing))

## Example posts:

Wow – we're national finalists #VEAwards2020! Can't wait to see if we win [category name]. We'll keep you posted @VisitEnglandBiz

Gosh, look at this view – captured by one of our guides while riding our #OrchardTrain yesterday. Not bad with a smartphone! #BritainsPrettiestFarm

We're so chuffed that @[writer] wrote so positively about our new #TreehouseTemple in today's @[publication]! [post the link]

# Reaching out through social media



Some travel journalists have strong social-media presences; others trawl Twitter or Instagram for stories (or send call-outs using the #journorequest hashtag). In terms of their finding story ideas, a compelling picture on Instagram can prove just as effective as a written press release. So it's worth reaching out to or following them to announce your presence.

**Building a relationship with a local or national Instagrammer, vlogger or other influencer can also be highly rewarding. But how exactly to go about this?**

1. Identify the right person. Follower numbers are important – anything over 5,000 on Instagram is good, for example – but so is the right sort of content, engagement and publication frequency. Search for appropriate influencers using paid-for tools such as [TRIBE](#) and [Upfluence](#).
2. When making your approach, be clear, courteous and professional: despite the common perception, the best bloggers aren't bladders, and nor are Instagrammers or vloggers. Most are wholly professional. Given that, and given that you don't want disappointment down the line, it pays to be open about your content expectations from the start.
3. Consider the costs. Unlike traditional journalists, influencers aren't employed by a company – so most require payment for their work. It's easy to be outraged by this: "they want a freebie and payment?" But it makes sense when seen from their side. Before making an approach, work out what you can realistically pay for the content you expect.
4. Alternatively, consider organising a tempting event – perhaps a sample of your product – and inviting one or some influencers to that.

## Social media tips and tools

1. Click the blue down arrow beside an Instagram profile's 'follow' button for suggestions of similar profiles
2. Hashtags are also a good way to search for relevant influencers on Instagram and Twitter
3. A free Instagram engagement-rate calculator is available at [phlanx.com](#)
4. Five free influencer marketing management tools are available via [aspireiq.com/blog/5-free-influencer-marketing-tools-to-get-you-started](#)