

What is a hook?

Have you ever been flipping around the TV and suddenly you see a TV host and she says “How to become an automatic millionaire! We’ll show you how. Coming up.” Then you flip past a few more channels and you see another host say “Is spanking child abuse? We’ll explore that issue more tonight.” Phrases like “How to become an automatic millionaire” and “Is spanking child abuse?” are examples of hooks. They immediately tell the viewer what’s going to be discussed and why he or she should tune in.

| Type of Hook | Sample pitch / hook |
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| Tie in with something you know is going to be in the news | What they’re not telling you about (specify timely event). |
| Tie in with a specific time of year (seasonal) | How to have your best family vacation ever – without going anywhere! |
| Tie in with an annual event | The NFL Playoffs Begin Next Week: Does your man love football more than you? Here’s a simple test you can give him to find out. |
| Controversial issue | Should people with expired visas be deported immediately? |
| A trend story | Not just computer games. More teenagers are playing musical instruments than ever before. |
| Evergreen feature | How to make the perfect cup of coffee! |
| How to solve a problem | How to look ten years younger by drinking coconut milk. |

Suppose you're an expert on nutrition. Here are examples of different "hooks" you could create for yourself to attract the media.

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| Tie in with something you know is going to be in the news | Can you judge a presidential candidate by what they eat on the campaign trail? This nutritionist says "yes." |
| Tie in with a specific time of year (seasonal) | 5 ways to avoid gaining weight during your summer vacation (and still cheat a little bit). |
| Tie in with an annual event | How to make delicious Holiday treats that are good for you (and nobody will know they're eating healthy). |
| Controversial issue | Should public schools be selling potato chips? |
| A trend story | Why more and more people are giving up TV. |
| Evergreen feature | How to make the perfect breakfast. |
| How to solve a problem | How to get your kids to give up junk food in 21 days. |

Six Ingredients to A Great Media Pitch

Step 1: I am _____.

Step 2: Make it a conversation, not a monologue by asking a question or two.

Step 3: Show that you know what they cover.

Step 4: What's in it for the audience/readers (your hook).

Step 5: Story – Who, What, Where, When, Why and/or Before and After.

Step 6: Ask what they think?

Pitch Example #1:

Hi. I'm Joanne Barker. You said that one of the things you look for is inspiring stories that are health-related, right? Well, I could show your readers how to change their health by simply using a pen and paper. Does that sound intriguing? When my doctor gave me six months to live, I was so stressed out that I began writing my thoughts in a notebook. But I did it in a highly-unusual way. For example, I'd write positive words in gigantic letters. This allowed me to change my thoughts and change my health. Three months later, I was cancer free...all from what I now call "Power Journaling." Since then I've taught hundreds of people how to use it...many of them have been able to transform their health too. Does this sound like it be of interest to your readers?

Pitch Example #2:

Hi. I'm Laura Johnson. As a certified financial planner, I have done over 1,000 consultations with couples about their retirement plan. I've discovered that there is usually one spouse who is much more in the dark than the other about the finances and they don't realize that their spouse is making a lot of mistakes. I'd like to propose a story for your "Have a Better Life" column that might be called something like "Watch Out for Your Spouse: How Good Intentions Could Ruin Your Retirement and What to Do About it." How does this sound?

Pitch Example #3:

Hi. I'm Joe Carter. I've noticed that you do a lot of relationship shows. Would you like to know why the best relationship expert you could ever interview is a taxi driver? Well, I was a taxi driver in New York City for five years. It gave me a front row seat where I could eavesdrop on people's conversations. And I noticed some real differences between couples who were having a good time and the ones who weren't. I put them all in a book called "Get in the Front Seat: A New York Cabbie shares the Secrets of New York's Most Romantic Couples." I could come on and share the five conversation secrets to having a more enjoyable date night. What do you think?