

How To Pitch To Media

1. Figure out what you are saying. What goes in the press release? Is it an event, or a campaign you are launching? What would be your dream headline?

2. Find the rights outlets to pitch.

PRINT:

- **Reporters:** Go to your local newspapers website and see which reporters write stories the issue you are advocating for. Get their email address. If you can't find it, call around or Google around to find their contact information.
- **Op-Ed:** If you cannot get a print reporter to write about your involvement in the summit, you can write an op-ed and send it to the op-ed submission email address for the paper. Successful op-eds provide an interesting angle to an argument, offer new research, and are timely.
- **Blogs:** Look for the "Contact" or "Submission" link on the blog.
- **Generation Progress:** Pitch stories to be posted on our blog.

BROADCAST:

- **Radio:** Find the news desk contact at your local stations.
- **Television:** Find the news desk contact at your local stations.

3. Send the release and your pitch to reporters. Copy and paste your press release into an email. Above the release, write your own brief pitch. For example:

I just came back from a selective, one-of-a-kind summit on young people and gun violence prevention in Chicago. The summit brought together unconventional allies. For example, some have experienced mass suburban gun violence (like Newtown), and others have experienced urban, gang related gun violence. A lot of the attendees have been active Ferguson organizers, and many are Chicago natives. I learned a lot while I was there and I am excited to bring my knowledge back home to work for stronger gun violence prevention measures in certain states. I would love to talk to you about my experience or potentially write an op-ed for publication. Are you interested? Thank you so much! [YOUR NAME & CONTACT INFO]

4. Follow-up. You didn't hear back? Be persistent! Try finding other emails, tweeting at them, similar reporters, etc.

Sample Press Release

Use this template as a guide when sending notices to media.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 15, 2014

CONTACT: Bob Smith
bob@gmail.com; 202.555.5555

#Fight4The33 Video: Jazz Musician Jon Batiste Partners with Generation Progress Ahead of Failed Senate Background Check Vote Anniversary

Young People Dance For The 33 Who Are Killed Each Day Due to Gun Violence

Washington, D.C.—Almost a year since the Senate’s failed vote on background checks for gun purchases, Generation Progress partnered with jazz musician Jon Batiste to release a new gun violence prevention video, #Fight4The33. The video highlights that each day, 33 people die due to gun violence.

“When the Senate failed to pass the background check bill last year, it was one of the lowest moments for our generation,” said Anne Johnson, Executive Director of Generation Progress. “Gun violence disproportionately affects young people, and almost all of us support background checks on gun purchases. With this video, we’re reminding Congress that Millennials haven’t stopped fighting for a common-sense solution to this issue.”

According to a recent report by Generation Progress, every 70 minutes an American under the age of 25 dies by gun fire.

“Congress broke a promise to Americans who lost family members and friends to gun violence,” said Sarah Clements, founder of the Junior Newtown Action Alliance and a leading member of the Generation Progress Gun Violence Prevention Network. “Our elected officials have failed to act and young Americans have suffered because of it.” Batiste wrote the song, “Life is Gold,” to recognize the 33 Americans who die each day due to gun violence. Many of the dancers—students at the Duke Ellington School of the Arts participated in the video because they have personal experiences with gun violence.

One dancer, Jordan Harris, first experienced gun violence when he was 10 years old. While Harris was attending Sunday School, a woman was shot and killed by her husband outside of Harris’ church sanctuary.

“I immediately broke down and cried. It was so difficult for me to learn at age 10 that there is truly no safe place in the world,” said Harris, who is now 15. “If you can be harmed at church, then you can be harmed anywhere.”

To learn more about the #Fight4The33 campaign and video, please visit Fight4The33.org.

How To Write A Pitch

Your Pitch Should:

- Introduce your story idea and define your angle. In other words, tell what you want to write about and explain your point of view and argument.
- Explain why your idea is timely, unique, important, and/or of interest to readers. The most important thing when developing your idea is to figure out why people reading the article should care about what you're writing about. Take a step back and ask: "What's interesting about this? What am I adding to the conversation that's not already out there?"
- Estimate a deadline for your piece.
- Include your phone number and email address.
- You can also attach clips and/or writing samples if you have written on the topic previously.

Example Of A Bad Pitch:

Dear Generation Progress,

I am a political science major and a writer for my campus newspaper. I'm interested in writing a story for Generation Progress with an alternative view of the Patriot Act, because I think it's really important for students to know about and understand. Would you be interested in a piece like this?

*Thanks,
Jack P. Student*

Example Of A Good Pitch For A Reported Feature:

Dear Generation Progress,

I would like to write a story for Generation Progress that attempts to explain why there hasn't been a powerful on-campus student movement against the Iraq war. Although most students seem to agree that it was a mistake for the United States to invade Iraq, a strong, unified student voice calling for the president to bring our troops home hasn't yet emerged. As a part of my analysis, I would like to compare the student activism of the 1960s to that of today, and argue that although there doesn't seem to be a unified student voice against the war, students today are expressing their opinions and making a difference on the national scene.

I will talk to 10 college activists from campuses across the country and attend a rally that is scheduled to take place next week at my college. To compare and contrast today's activism to that of the Vietnam era, I will also interview administrators and anti-war student activists from the 1960s.

It is important for someone from our generation to write this piece. Various political writers, like Thomas Friedman of the New York Times and Courtney Martin of the American Prospect, have recently argued that college activists are ineffective. Generation Progress's readership will enjoy reading an article written by a college student that counters these opinions.

If my pitch is accepted, I can turn in a draft of the piece by the end of this month.

*Thank you,
Joyce Q. Student
jstudent@university.edu
(202) 555-1212*

Example Of A Good Pitch For An Opinion Column:

Dear Generation Progress,

I'm often disturbed by the lack of diversity in the contemporary environmental movement. I would like to write an opinion piece for Generation Progress arguing that the perceived whiteness of contemporary environmentalism keeps the movement from reaching the places that need it most: low-income communities, which have disproportionately high levels of minority residents. Because the movement currently places so much emphasis on individual choices made by consumers—like the decision to buy environmentally friendly light bulbs or hybrid cars—environmentalists have distanced themselves from those who can't afford to make those choices.

It's no surprise, then, that students of color and low-income students feel helpless and uninspired when it comes to climate change. There aren't enough high-visibility role models of color in the environmental movement, and campus activism is dominated by white activists. As a student of color who cares about climate change, I can offer personal experience and a unique perspective to the discussion.

If my pitch is accepted, I can submit a draft by the end of next week.

*Thank you,
Thomas G. Student
tstudent@university.edu
(202) 555-1212*