

The Newsworthiness Checklist

A honest easy-to-use checklist to help PR hopefuls decide if their story is actually worth a journalist's time

By [@alexcornici](#) | [What is SEO](#)

THE NEWSWORTHINESS CHECKLIST

Should You Even Bother Pitching?

News Value	Ask Yourself	Did You Pass?	Reality Check
Timeliness	Is it happening now, or tied to something current?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	"Old news" isn't news. It's a blog post.
	Can you explain why this matters today and not last week?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	If you're stretching, you're losing.
Impact	Will this affect more than just your client and their cat?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	No one cares if it won't change lives.
	Do you have any solid numbers or data to back it up?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	"We feel like it's big" doesn't count.
Prominence	Is someone well-known involved? Like, actually well-known?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	"CEO of a startup" isn't always famous.

	Would a stranger recognize this person without needing Google?	[] Yes [] No	If not, stop pretending.
Proximity	Is it relevant to the journalist's local/regional audience?	[] Yes [] No	"We exist on the internet" ≠ local.
	Does the story hit close to home in culture, place, or sentiment?	[] Yes [] No	Vibes aren't geography.
Conflict	Is there tension? Disagreement? Controversy?	[] Yes [] No	Polite consensus is not headline-worthy.
	Is there something at stake—reputation, dollars, survival?	[] Yes [] No	Drama sells. Boredom doesn't.
Human Interest	Is there a compelling human story that makes people feel something?	[] Yes [] No	Press releases rarely cry on camera.
	Would a non-PR person voluntarily read this story and forward it to a friend?	[] Yes [] No	If not, it's not "interesting."

TALLY YOUR SCORE

- 10–12 Yes: You have a story. Maybe even a good one.
- 7–9 Yes: Salvageable. Add conflict, stats, or a human angle.
- 4–6 Yes: Danger zone. Do not pass Go. Rework it.
- 0–3 Yes: Nope. You're pitching air. Put the keyboard down.

Stick this checklist next to your coffee, tattoo it on your pitching wrist, or tape it to the intern's monitor. I won't judge you for printing it on fancy cardstock. (Actually, I will. But that's on-brand.)