



# BE REACTIVE: NEWSJACKING

## WHAT IS NEWSJACKING?:

It sounds like a pretty awful and aggressive term, but **newsjacking is essentially 'piggybacking'** on topical news stories in order to achieve media coverage. This is how you, as a small business, can leverage broader topics to position you as part of a wider conversation, get seen as an expert and get coverage on TV, radio or in print/online media.

The trick is to stay aware of news and trends relating to your industry, region or expertise, because, where there is a story, there is an opportunity for you.

Perhaps there is a **shift in your industry**; Legislation that impacts your industry; Small business funding that you can relate to or discuss; New technology that can change the way you work; A celebrity has been seen enjoying a type of treatment similar to your offering; The royal baby buzz could allow for you to position your brand in the media conversation...

It could be anything but if you have a valid, expert opinion, feedback or comment to add to the narrative, you can pitch to those journalists writing the relevant stories to share your side of the story or your input on what is transpiring.

I talk a lot about **positioning yourself as an expert** as part of your PR and this is a great way to do it.

There is **no time to waste** with this type of coverage though - if you are not on the ball, not quick enough to respond or don't have the right information or imagery, the opportunity will go to someone else. With it being topical, there is no room for a journalist to sit on the story and wait for information.

## HOW DO YOU DO IT?:

Once you have build a bit of a 'black book' of contacts, you will have a couple of relevant journalists that will be covering this type of story and with them, you will be able to put yourself forward for comment as/when they need you.

You can also **be proactive** with these contacts as well; if you hear of news or developments that you can provide insight on, get in touch. \*Find out more about what a PR pitch is and how to write one\*

Until we get to that point, the secret is #JOURNOREQUEST.

A humble hashtag on Twitter that holds so much magic!

If something is topical, newsworthy and relevant, it is probably being talked about on this hashtag, so this is the first place to look when you know there is something happening that you can comment on.

## PREPARING FOR NEWSJACKING OPPORTUNITIES:

Some newsjacking opportunities may be completely spontaneous and unpredictable, which means you have to be on the ball to respond/pitch as quickly as possible. Whereas others will be 'scheduled' topical opportunities.

**You'll have heard me talking about the PR & Social Media Planner before. It's in THE COLLECTIVE, so make use of it!!**

Using a calendar like this will enable you to work through the months ahead, picking out the dates and events that might be relevant to you.

**Be very specific** and ask yourself some questions as you go:

- Can I add value on this topic?
- What would my hook be in pitching myself around this date?
- Is this likely to give me coverage?
- What areas of expertise can I bring in on this topic?
- Have I got a unique perspective to offer on this?

Chances are that you will pull out a number of opportunities that you can use to inform specific pitches to journalist contacts as well as to prepare yourself to be reactive when opportunity arises.

There will be the obvious events like Christmas, Mother's Day, New Year, Back to School etc but there will also be those that will be more niche to your industry. The important thing is to be aware of what is coming up and how you can use it to your advantage.

**Start to plan hooks and story outlines for these milestones.** Some may be very business specific, others may be more personal. Some you may use client case studies for, others you may be able to pin your product launch to.

To use this type of hook to best effect though, you will need to **think about your lead times**. The time between a journalist researching and writing the story and it being printed in a magazine or loaded online.

Long Lead - 3-6 months

Short Lead - 2-12 weeks

Online - Almost Immediate

So, if you've highlighted an opportunity on your planner, work backwards to give yourself the right lead time for the media you want to target. You may not always get the timing spot on, these are quite broad timescales, but once you start speaking to a couple of journalists you will be able to add their schedules and timelines into your planner. They may let you know that a topic is on their radar but they won't be starting it until the following month - this is great because you then have information to act on.

**So, eyes and ears open and have a few punchy quotes up your sleeve!**