

# I Pitch Like A Girl.

By Sue Yannello



## **I'm often asked how I land media coverage for clients.**

What's the secret sauce? The recipe to counter reporter resistance? I figured it out one day in the backyard playing baseball with my two sons.

I'm not an athlete by any stretch. When I run — it's the shower. When I lift — it's my sons' laundry off the floor. When I throw — it's a fit because I missed a sale at Banana Republic.

When I pitch to my boys I give it my Roger Clemens best. But inevitably, my boys laugh, make fun and tease, "Mom, you always pitch like a girl!"

So when trying to define my method of selling stories to reporters, I guess I follow my baseball style. I pitch like a girl. For example, I always end each email with the salutation, "Thank you from the bottom of my heart." My co-workers gag. But heck, it works, especially with reporters who can be rushed, rude and downright cynical. (I know because I was one.)

Remember, reporters are flesh and blood folks, with kids who get bad grades on report cards, mortgages to pay, nasty bosses, and yes... believe it or not, feelings. They live in a harsh world of deadlines and job cuts, so every now and then a kind and heartfelt salutation like "Thank you from the bottom of my heart" may actually warm their hearts and win you some ink.



My girly-style pitching sure worked with a financial writer at USA Today. Out of the blue, I called her and warmly said, "I truly love your stuff. I'm a big fan. I've got some great small business owners you can talk to and I'd love to put you in touch with them."

In the next half hour she interviewed one of my clients who wound up in one of her stories the next day in USA Today. I followed up with a story idea about funding your small business with your 401K and landed three more of my clients in that story that ran a few weeks later. Take that, machismo! Sometimes it works to give it the good ol' girly whirl!



## THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Another time I used an all-out-girly pitch with a lead columnist for the Wall Street Journal. I heard she was writing a column on married couples who work together. My email to her went something like: "I know you're swamped like crazy. But I have three married couples who would be great for your upcoming column. Couple #1 is a crazy, dynamic duo out of Milwaukee who is a hoot and will make you laugh out loud. Couple #2 is a hard-charging team out of Atlanta who will make you dizzy with their energy. I'd love to talk to you so call me anytime."

The reporter was intrigued with the email and wrote back right away. That email lead to two of my clients landing in her column, and today a great relationship between the two of us. Since that column, we've gotten our clients in four of her columns, two with huge photos

I also want to tell you, in reverse, that this reporter approaches PR people like a girl and not the BIG journalist she truly is. When she told me one of my clients would make her column and then the column came out with no mention of my client, she emailed me and my co-worker to profusely apologize to both of us. Imagine that! A lead columnist from the Wall Street Journal apologizing for not putting my client in the story?? It was very "girly" of her — and classy too!

## The Washington Post

This powder puff pitch doesn't only work with gals. After repeated rejection from the Washington Post, I emailed my utter desperation and frustration to a big-boy journalist, a Washington Post business columnist. He called me right away. I was shocked and blurted out, to my embarrassment, a very girly "I love you!" (I wanted to kick myself for saying that, but it just came out.) The reporter surprisingly barked back, "I love you too but you may not still love me when I tell you I need information on your client for a story I'm writing in the next fifteen minutes." With that, I loved him even more. His column soon ran with a write up of my client.



I also want to fess up that girl pitching, no matter how cute, how heartfelt, may not always work. I sent a pitch to one of my dearest friend's husband, a producer at WABC-TV in New York. It was full of girly "How are you's? I loved your Christmas card... Do you know I gave your wife your daughter's name because it would have been my daughter's name if I had a girl? I had a great time at your wedding on the beach. It was breathtaking...and did you know I met your wife in the city last week for a drink?"

"Sue," he said. "I don't care if you were my wife, I'm not mentioning both of your clients in the story we're running. We'll cover the issue but I'm not plugging your product or any product in my news show."

Turns out, he did cover the story with a mere mention of one of my clients but absolutely no mention of their product. So much for the girl fest.



## The bottom line here.

I truly believe if your pitch is well-crafted, it doesn't matter what your style. I have one coworker who uses research, facts and figures to land stories. Another co-worker uses his incredible knack for storytelling to weave creative tales about ordinary folks to make them sound extraordinary.

Me, I'll stick to my style – pitching like a girl. And by the way – thanks from the bottom of my heart for reading this!



### Written by Sue Yannello

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