



How To: Free PR for Your Museum

**6 Steps to help make getting
free PR just a little bit easier.**

This article was based on an article for startups [originally published on Noah Kagan's Ok Dork](#). It has been re-purposed for the museum world by [Museum Hack](#).

How To: Free PR for Your Museum

This Article Will Cover:

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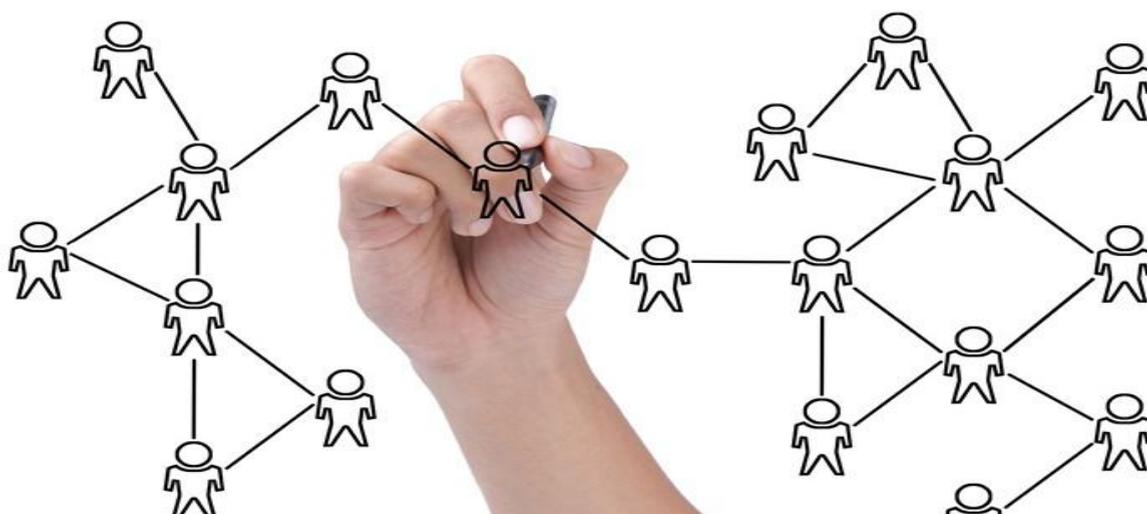
When you're looking to grow your museum and attract new audiences, you can feel overwhelmed with the number of marketing tools out there: Blogging, Social Media, Public Relations....and that's just scratching the surface!

It can be difficult to know where to start. You want to create buzz about your upcoming exhibit, and turn journalists into allies. Even if you don't have a large budget to hire someone, there is still a lot you can do to get the word out about your museum.

We want to help make getting free PR just a little easier.

In **6 steps** we'll show you how to:

- Tell people what it is that your museum does — and make sure that they remember you
- Find the reporters that can actually help you get buzz for your museum (and reporters that you, in turn, can help)
- Get featured in publications, promote your museum's mission, and raise awareness about your upcoming exhibits



Step 1. Perfect Your One Sentence Museum Pitch

You want to be able to clearly communicate your museum's mission and specialization in one sentence. You want to be clear, simple, and get right to the heart of what you do. This is where perfecting a one sentence "pitch" about your museum will help.

For example, if a reporter asked us what, exactly, is it that we do, we'd say:



“We host museum tours that for people who don't like museums.”

Your “One Sentence Museum Pitch” will make it easier for you to get the press on board, because they will clearly understand what is it that you are doing. To get started, try using this one sentence pitch template below:

<My Museum Name> is developing <New Offering> to help <Our Audience> <Solve a Problem> with <A Secret Sauce>.

What's a **Secret Sauce**? That's the way your museum does it differently from the other museums and cultural offerings in your town. This is what *you* do that's special and awesome!

For more information about this formula that we've adapted for museums, see this article by Adeo Ressi of Founder's Institute: [Mad Libs For Pitches: How To Perfect The One Sentence Pitch.](#)

You want to keep your One Sentence Museum Pitch plain and simple. Avoid using over complicated language and any highly technical art or science jargon. You want everyone to be able to understand what you are saying easily.

Step 2: Make a VIP List of Most Relevant Reporters



Think about your town, your city, or your state. Who is *the* reporter for your area? Who is the journalist, reporter, or blogger that, if you woke up tomorrow and saw that they had written about you, you'd be ecstatic?

You want to keep a **'VIP list'** of these people for your area. These are people that you'd want to reach out to and build relationships with. You want to find reporters in your area that are writing about cultural events, night life, or family activities. These are reporters that are reaching your audience: the people that you want to come in to your museum.

Maybe you can easily think of one, two, or a dozen reporters off the top of your head. But if you are struggling to think of the right people you want to add to your VIP list, we have some simple tips to help you find the right reporters to get in contact with.

Here's what you'll need:

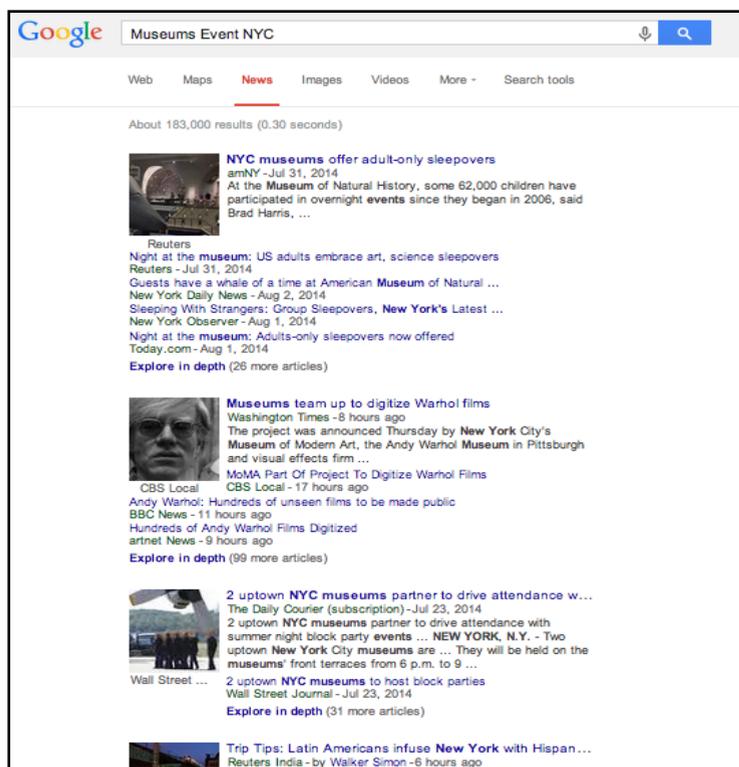
- Thirty minutes of free time (to learn how to do it) and then fifteen minutes of free time (when you do it for yourself)
- A Web Browser
- A spreadsheet (like [Google Docs](#)) to make your VIP List in. Here's an example of that you can use to get started: [Museum VIP-List Template](#)
Just click 'File' → 'Make a Copy'

Step 2: Make a VIP List of Most Relevant Reporters

Step by step, here is how you can get started and put together your VIP list.

First, go to [Google News](#) and type in “**Museums Event <your city (or surrounding area)>**.”

When we did this search for “Museum Event NYC”, we got the following results back:



The search results that you see are reporter or contributors to publications who have written about museum events in your area. Chances are that if you reach out to them and let them know about your museum or your upcoming event, they might find it interesting.

Action Step: For every person that you see in your search results, copy the Reporter’s Name, Magazine / Newspaper name, and a Link to their article into your spreadsheet.

Didn’t find anything in the **Google Search**? Here’s a few ideas:

- Try using different key words (like the name of your museum or the name of other museums in your region) or a wider area (the name of your county or state instead of your city) around your museum. You can also use the regular Google Search to see if it renders better results
- Google isn’t the only option! [Buzzsumo](#) is a fantastic site that will show you the most shared articles on the topic.

Your end goal: Get a healthy list of reporters that you can get in contact with and start building a relationship with.

Step 2: Make a VIP List of Most Relevant Reporters

Just like you shouldn't go shopping on an empty stomach, you want to be *smart* about which reporters you pick — and how many.

Ideally you want to be spending your time pitching people who *want* to write about you.

Here are a few things that you can do to find out more about the person you would like to get in contact with. We suggest logging all of the reporters you find into your Museum VIP-List.

Here is [what our VIP-List looks like](#) after we started filling it with information

Let's use one of the articles we found as an example of how to collect all the information.

- **Starting Article:**
[“Guests have a whale of a time at American Museum of Natural History sleeper”](#)
- **Reporter Name:**
Justin Rocket Silverman
- **Reporter Bio:**
“Senior features writer and video producer who covers all things cultural in New York City.”

This is a great start, but we want to dig a little further and find out a bit more about the reporter.

Guests have a whale of a time at American Museum of Natural History sleeper

The program, usually for kids, allowed 175 adults to eat, drink wine, enjoy a space show and fall asleep on a cot under the museum's giant blue whale on Friday night. Attendees paid \$375 each.

BY JUSTIN ROCKET SILVERMAN [Follow](#) / NEW YORK DAILY NEWS /
Saturday, August 2, 2014, 10:04 PM

141 25

SHARE THIS URL
nydn.us/1kejga6 COPY

MICHAEL GRAAE FOR NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

Attendees slept on cots under the giant blue whale in the Milstein Family Hall of Ocean Life Friday night at the American Museum of Natural History's first-ever sleeper for adults.

RELATED STORIES

National Lighthouse Museum to open this fall

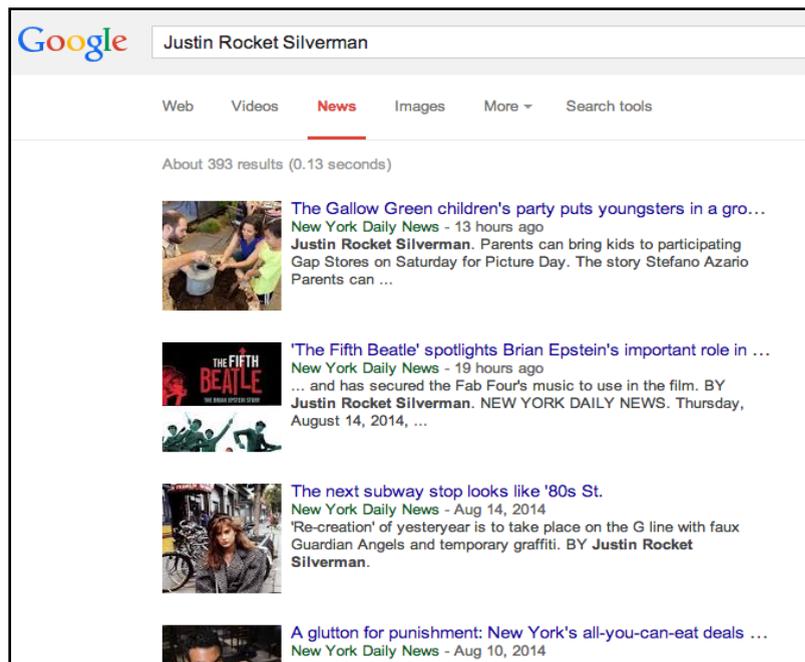
The most coveted place to spend a night this weekend wasn't a swank Tribeca hotel or a Hamptons estate, but the American Museum of Natural History, where 175 people ate, drank, watched an outer space show and finally collapsed on a cot under the giant blue whale.

"I don't usually sleep well in public, but the whale was a soothing presence," said Kathryn Duque, 25, from Queens.

Step 2: Make a VIP List of Most Relevant Reporters

With a few Google Searches (such as “[Reporter Name + Twitter](#)”) we can find the reporter’s Twitter and LinkedIn, personal website, or even *all* of the reporter’s articles!

- **Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/justinrocket>
- **LinkedIn:** <https://www.linkedin.com/in/justinrsilverman>
- **Website:** <http://www.justinrocket.com/articles.html>
- **Google Search:**



Why are we searching for all of this information?

We want to get an idea of who this reporter is.

From this short search, we’ve learned that this specific reporter doesn’t just write about museums and museum culture, but is more interested in writing about cool cultural events around NYC.

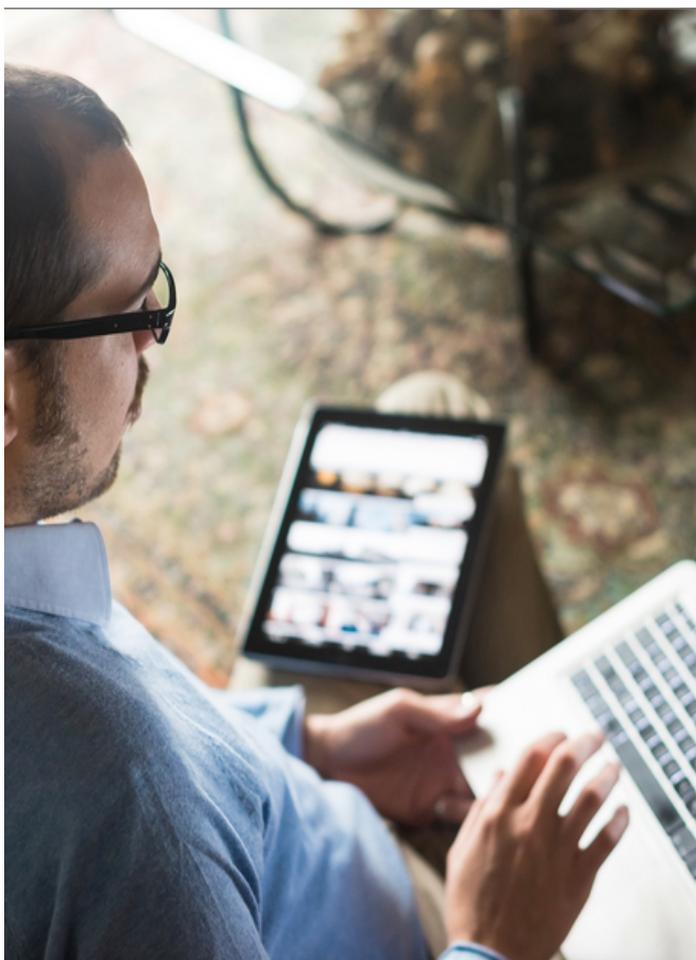
This kind of search will help you in two ways: you’ll be able to weed out reporters who are unlikely to write about you, and you’ll be able to focus your pitch *specifically* to the reporters who are the best fit for you, based on what the reporter is interested in and has written about previously.

Step 3: Write Your Email Pitch

When it's time to get in touch with the reporter, you want to use an **email pitch**.

Important things to keep in mind:

- Surveys of reporters have shown that **81%** of writers prefer to be pitched on email.
- **88%** of writers prefer a pitch to be less than 200 words.
- Your email subject line is **key!** 85% of writers pitched through email open the email based on *just* the subject line. The subject line should be: **direct, concise and descriptive**.
- Your email subject should be **45-65** characters long



Usually you want to include the following in your email pitch:

- How your museum/pitch relates to what the reporter has written about before
- Your museum's name
- The URL to your museum's website
- A short (75 words or less) description of your project (Remember your '1 sentence pitch'? You'll want to build off of that!)
- A short (50-75 word) bio about your museum
- Any relevant dates — has your museum project or event started already? When will it run until?

The most important thing you want to remember with your email pitches is to keep them concise, informative and personable

Step 3: Write Your Email Pitch



Here is an example email outreach template that you can use:

“Hi [First Name],

My name is [first name] from [Museum Name]. After reading your article [story title] I thought your readers might be interested to hear more about [topic from their article which relates to what you're pitching] since the subject of [general topic from the article] is something you write about. Looking over your bio and past articles sounds like you cover [topic from the article] a lot.

We have [an event] coming up that [insert your one sentence pitch here] and we thought it relates directly to your interests and I wanted to shoot over some more info/details for you to review/check out.

Let me know if you'd be interested?

Thanks,

[Your full name]”

Step 3: Write Your Email Pitch

Here is an example of how we used the template to reach out about a Museum Hack event.

Subject: Epic Museum Hack VIP Night Events at the Met

Hey Justin-

My name is Esther from Museum Hack. After reading your article "[Guests have a whale of a time at American Museum of Natural History sleepover](#)" I thought you would be interested in hearing more about our VIP Night Events at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. After looking over your bio and past articles, it looks like you cover unique cultural event in NYC, so we thought we'd get into contact!

We do museum tours for people who don't like museums. Museum Hack want to make museums fun and fascinating, and our VIP nights are spectacularly cool events. We thought it relates directly to your interests and I wanted to shoot over some more info for you to check out: <http://www.museumhack.com/about/>

Do you want to come on a tour with us? Please email me back if you are interested!

In museums we trust,

Esther Snippe



Step 4. Figure Out The Best Time To Reach Out

69% of journalists prefer to be pitched in the morning.

You ideally want to make sure you're the most recent email in their inbox when they check their email.

Another inside tip? Look at their tweeting patterns, how early do they start sending out tweets? If they are sending tweets out they for sure have checked their email at least once that morning to make sure there is nothing crazy urgent they need to attend to. Usually if they are tweeting, they have checked their email.

You can also use [Boomerang](#) to schedule emails to go out at a specific time.

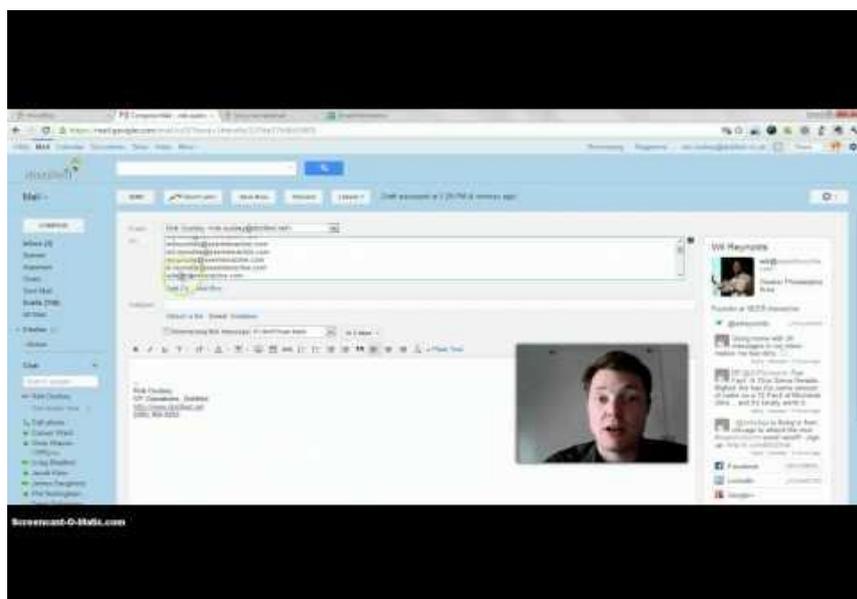


Step 5. How To Find Your Reporter's Email Addresses

The first thing is to check the news article, their bio, Twitter or their website to see if they have their contact listed.

If their email address is not there, don't worry, there are still things you can do to find it!

Watch this [video](#) of how to do this.



To do this you need:

- A [Gmail](#) account, if you don't have one already (most people do)
- The Rapportive plugin from [Rapportive.com](#) to get rich contact information inside Gmail
- The Google Doc spreadsheet at bit.ly/name2email

If you want to save some time and use a tool which does this automatically and actually verifies emails by pinging the server with different email heuristics combinations you could use one of these tools:

- <https://toofr.com>
- <http://www.emailfinder.io>

Using any of the above tools, you just type in the first name and last name and domain (the part of the email address after the '@', usually the name of the publication the reporter writes for or 'gmail'.com) and the tool does its thing and gives you the email address.

Step 6. How To Pitch a Reporter on your VIP List



You are ready to go!

- You have a list of relevant reporters based on your museum (*your VIP list*)
- You wrote a good email, based off of the 'Museum Hack Email Pitch Template'
- You know the best time to reach out to your reporter because you studied them in the wild
- You have their email address.

This is it. Your moment of glory. Go ahead and do your thing. Send them your email and tell them about your awesome upcoming museum event!

How Museum Hack Can Help

Over time, you'll tweak and change this process so that it becomes *your* process and gets personalized to your museum, your 'secret sauce', and your style — but these as the steps that you can go through to get started and do your own Public Relations for free.

*Very good guides.
They kept it interesting and
exciting. I would love to go with
them on another Museum
Hack.*

Elliot J.,
Google NYC



We'd love to work with your museum to:

- Bring new visitors in the door, and keep them coming back
- Nourish your docents and volunteers
- Enthuse and energize your trustees and donors
- Engage Millennials, who are the future funders and trustees of your organization
- Solve the unique challenges of your organization in your community

You can involve us for a small task or a major campaign, from a distance or at your site. We can:

- Lead a staff workshop to start a brainstorm fueled by passion
- Lead a workshop to revitalize your Board
- Spice up a marketing brochure
- Set up and populate online/social media engagement
- Find and/or train docents or other volunteers
- Produce a series of events: hosted tours, cocktail parties, fundraisers, etc.
- Consult on and achieve a specific goal (“grow membership by 300%”)

We're not just suggesting what can be done: we are hands-on, feet-on-the-floor walking with you to make it happen. We will get you results. People will leave and tell their friends, “This is the most fun I've ever had in a museum. You've got to go.”

About Museum Hack



Museum Hack officially launched in late summer of 2013. One year later,

- we have 14 tour guides
- give approximately 20 tours per week
- have served over 3,500 people
- are in the Top 10 on TripAdvisor for New York City
- are rated with five stars on Yelp
- and have worked for companies like Google, Adobe, PayPal, Ernst & Young, and Deutsche Bank.

Our ideas and techniques aren't brand new; they're familiar to the Museum world. But we offer accessibility and relevance by being interactive, personalizing our events, using social media, and being genuinely passionate. (Oh, and did we mention, fun?)

Let us help you and your museum grab and excite a new audience of art patrons in your town. Our unconventional approach is guaranteed to bring new ideas—and valuable new audiences.

Email to info@museumhack.com or call **+1-212-203-2729 any time.**