



Gift Guides

CHRISTMAS IN JULY

GET INTO THE HOLIDAY SPIRIT, GET YOUR PRODUCT IN HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDES.

Twas' the (177th) day before Christmas, and all through the office, all the PR folks were a' swarming, they were getting a bit nauseous...

When the calendar flips to July 1, many of us are thinking about fireworks and vacations, but for media outlets as well as product managers and B2C media relations pros, it's all eyes on winter holiday season. If you have a product catalog, chances are the number one thing on your wish list is a coveted gift guide placement. As the media landscape has continued to evolve with print publications folding and more digital outlets appearing every day, there are opportunities to score those placements.

To make your holiday gift guide pitching a cinch (and to prevent you from becoming a Grinch), here's a Christmas in July guide to get you through the season.

GIFT GUIDE PITCHING BEST PRACTICES

Now that you've had a refresher, here are some gift guide pitching nuances you should follow.

CONSENT: Before you send your pitch, send a quick note to see if they're open to receiving product. This also helps to confirm they're the right contact for this year.

LEGAL: When shipping product to reporters, be mindful of any dollar thresholds or other considerations. For example, if you're shipping alcohol, the media contact will need to sign for delivery to verify their age.

HOW GIFT GUIDE PITCHING IS SIMILAR TO EVERYDAY MEDIA RELATIONS

Before we get into the nuances of holiday gift guide pitching, it's important to reiterate some of the fundamentals of media pitching that apply here.

TARGET: Solidify your pitch list by identifying a mix of print and digital outlet targets. Make a diverse list of outlets and prioritize them.

FOCUS: It's better to send a personalized pitch to 10-20 key contacts than spray and pray hundreds of contacts.

RESEARCH: Use every tool at your disposal. Flip through past physical copies of magazines, use Google, leverage your favorite

database like Cision or MuckRuck and look up prospective contacts on social media.

PREP: Know your budget, have product on standby and have all your media materials – including high-resolution images – ready to go.

PITCH: Keep it short, tailored and explain why you think your product could be a fit for an outlet's audience. If there are any gift guide labels (like Under \$25), include those, too.

FOLLOW-UP: But don't overwhelm. You don't want to end up on the naughty list.

LOGISTICS: Thanks to remote work, some reporters may not receive mail at the masthead's office address. Confirm addresses for shipping, as well as dates and times of delivery, so everything ships smoothly.

MEDIA LANDSCAPE: In your research, be mindful of freelancers who may write for multiple outlets. You could send one pitch that covers five potential placements (verses someone who may blind pitch and the same reporter gets multiple pitches).



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Before you make your list and check it twice...



Consider your budget, from product to shipping. Also keep in mind surprise costs (like return shipping fees should a contact not be able to receive a package).



With long-lead print, start pitching in July/August. For digital outlets, start pitching after Labor Day. If you get a note that it's too early, that's not a loss! Make a note to follow-up.



If you're on the client-side, try combining multiple products in your introductory pitch to give a reporter options to consider. If you're at an agency and represent multiple products, combine relevant products for efficiency.



It's all about the experience. You have one shot to make an impression, and with gift guide pitching, you're able to bring a pitch to life with a physical mailer. From the first outreach to final follow-up, make your touchpoints count.

Now that we've given you the basics to get started on your holiday gift guide pitching, we wanted to give you some parting words of advice. Before you send your first pitch, make sure you have frank conversations with leadership or your client about expectations. If you exclusively focus on the major national outlets, you're limiting your options – sending a sample doesn't guarantee coverage. But by diversifying your target list, focusing your time and energy on your most relevant outlets and making the experience as seamless as possible for the reporter, you'll find yourself (and we hope, your product) on the nice list.