

# How to Create a Media List (And Then Maintain It)

Wendy Ramirez, Media Relations Team,  
[Notified](#)



Simply put, a media contact list is a key factor for successful public relations. It's a resource that houses contact information of various journalists, bloggers, editors and influencers who are from a specific publication, outlet or industry. This comes in handy when it's time to send press releases, media advisories or other types of communications.

All companies that practice [PR](#) will need a good and robust media contact list to be successful. The point of a media list is to give you the opportunity to reach these individuals and maintain successful coverage and rapports.

Whether you've maintained a curated list for years or are wetting your feet and looking into a paid solution, a media contact list is a powerful tool to help build relationships and amplify your campaigns.

But you need to be smart in how you use and manage this database – mass emails to anonymous contacts and working with outdated data can render your efforts ineffective.

## Why Is It Important to Have a Good

# Media Contact List?

When distributing a [press release](#), you will send your news to multiple contacts included in your list. In order to receive coverage that you or your client are looking for, you will need to have a solid, curated media list.

To help guide you, here are two key questions we'll answer:

- How is a media contact list created?
- How do you maintain a media contact list?

## How to Create a Media Contact List

In order to build your list, it's important to understand what you're looking for. You need to keep in mind the topic and, consequently, the target audience you're trying to reach.

Here are some steps which will help you obtain the right information.

### **1. Spend quality time researching specific media outlets and journalists.**

With the help of free tools—a search engine like Google or a social media platform like Twitter— or paid subscriptions to a [media database](#), you can look for the media outlets and journalists that are specific to your topic and target audience. It's important to be precise in selecting the most appropriate outlet or journalist relevant to your topic.

### **2. Create a “key term” list related to your search.**

Work smarter, not necessarily harder, to maximize the potential of your media database. Rather than searching by outlet, journalist or industry, you can also try searching by key phrases or terms which can reveal niches and opportunities that perhaps weren't initially obvious.

Creating a list of key terms or phrases before you begin your search is also useful, as many media and [influencer databases](#) will allow you to search through a “talking about” filter. This lets you input your key terms or phrases and be directed to the relevant contact(s).

Additionally, it may be fruitful to go directly to an outlet’s webpage and search for your key terms and phrases there to find out who has previously written about similar topics. You can also try a reverse search and search by target location to discover new outlets rather than searching for a specific reporter or influencer.

### **3. Build better media contact lists with the help of AI.**

It’s also possible to get better results from a smarter database powered by AI. Notified’s [Connect module](#) automatically pinpoints influential, relevant journalists in real time based on the [media monitoring](#) and social listening you have done and surfaces contacts who are writing about your brand and your industry.

Connect is also a powerful search engine that allows you to freely discover influencers and journalists based on your preferences. No matter how niche your topic, you’ll get a tailored list of recommended contacts.

### **4. Find the correct contact.**

When creating your list, you need to be sure you’re obtaining the correct contact information. You can cross reference this information on the media outlet’s website or by calling the publication directly to ask for information.

It’s always a good practice to reach out to the journalist or editor and confirm if they are interested in receiving your news, asking for their consent to be included in a media contact list.

Above all, you should avoid sending your news to general emails. Usually general emails are used for inquires—not for press releases.

### **5. Get the right information.**

The information that should be included on a media list for each contact is as follows:

- Name of the journalist/blogger/editor/influencer
- Email address or phone number
- Name of the publication they work for
- Industry they write about or cover

## **How to Maintain a Media Contact List**

To maintain a current media contact list, think of your database as a working draft. You should constantly be making additions and deletions to keep the content as current as possible.

It's important that the information within your media contact list is always accurate and is updated regularly to reflect the changes in the media environment. To do so, distribution platforms will often publish the latest news on media moves. It's also good practice to connect with your media contacts on LinkedIn to stay on top of job changes.

### **1. Use bounce back emails to your advantage.**

While receiving bounce backs to your outreach may feel frustrating, they can potentially be a wealth of information. Who's on holiday, who's covering for your contact, who has left the organization and who has replaced them. These are important pieces of information you can gather from auto-response emails.

If, however, you've received no response from any given

contact despite trying to contact them several times, it may be time to move on and research alternate contacts.

## **2. Don't be afraid to dive into niches.**

While pitching bigger, more traditional media conglomerates has merits and can often yield favorable results, it's also important to discover reporters at smaller publications, bloggers and [influencers with niche beats](#). Curating lists within your database that you can use for different types of pitches or to even spin the same story in a different way to appeal to a niche list of contacts.

This is where knowing your contacts can come in extremely handy. For example, you may have a trusted contact who writes about business issues but has a personal penchant for fashion. This is information that you can leverage depending on your outreach needs. Further, by segmenting your database into tailored lists of reporters or influencers who cover niche topics, your chances of securing coverage increase.

## **3. Cross-reference competitor media coverage.**

While your initial reaction may be to keep competitors at arm's length, [monitoring their PR and marketing efforts](#) can prove useful in garnering new media contacts. It can be frustrating to see your competition land a great media placement, but the silver lining is that you're now privy to that media or influencer contact.

Make a note of the editor or reporter who worked on the story and find their contact information using their outlet's website or social media platforms. Add them to your contact list with a note referencing their coverage of your competitor. You can mention this coverage in the future when you reach out to them with your own pitch.

# ***Bonus: Why Should You Tailor Your Pitch to Media?***

Some extra value here!

Sending a generic, mass email to your entire media contact list is never appropriate. It not only sends your pitch to many recipients who aren't interested, but the impersonal tone of the email will likely put many recipients off. It also is a clear sign that you didn't do your homework in researching the most relevant contacts.

Remember, your contacts are people and they are busy, and you need to respect their time by targeting the most relevant information to the right people. Tailor your pitches to specific reporters or influencers based upon their professional (or even personal) interests, and when it's appropriate, you can personalize your email to optimize the likelihood of receiving a response.

Get to know your contacts both professionally and personally. Building long-term relationships takes time and effort, but those who play the long game are likely to reap the rewards of curating a powerful media database and strong professional relationships.

Pitching your story to journalists and influencers can be difficult, even with a newsworthy event and relevant content. By using a media contacts list, you can greatly improve your media engagement, build more targeted lists and identify opportunities for coverage. Your ability to better target your outreach and tailor your pitches will also help you develop stronger, more genuine relationships.

Good luck building and maintaining your media contact list! If you'd like to learn more about how Notified can help, [click here](#).