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June 15 2006

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## A picture tells a thousand words

Craig  McGuire  - 24 Apr 2006 06:00

**Pitches with art are often more compelling than words alone.**

Whether it's a Web screen shot, product/event picture, headshot, or an icon, good art can elevate a pitch from a maybe to a definite. The challenge is to provide the art in an acceptable form and to deliver it in a way that is convenient for the media you are targeting.

The first rule: Never send attachments unsolicited. It is inconvenient for a reporter whose e-mail is almost always full, and it could get stuck behind a firewall.

The exception to the rule is established contacts. "If you have a relationship with a journalist, then firewalls are not an issue," says James Little, VP at Pacific Media Partners. "They have your e-mail address on their safe list, so they'll get it."

Once the journalist has requested the art, submitting it via e-mail is standard. Print publications will request pictures with much higher resolution than online media - 300 dpi (dots per inch) for print, as opposed to 72 dpi for Web. Most will ask for JPEG or GIF files, with a sizing in the 4-inch-by-6-inch range. (TIFF files are generally larger and thus not ideal.)

In the event you are sending large files with higher resolution or multiple pictures, you may be asked to send them on a CD, over an FTP site, or have them on a special Web page. Denise Tanguay, media relations coordinator for Arizona State University, began adding a "download photo" link to her press releases a couple of years ago.

"Many newspapers love the ease of use," Tanguay says. "I give them about two to four image choices per news release and send a link when I e-mail the release." Tanguay does not limit the photo use, but the link is password-protected, so only those who receive the release know the password.

Few publications accept black-and-white images anymore. Unless you receive specific instructions on color, CMYK is the preferred format. For logos, an EPS file with all fonts embedded as outlines is essential.

"An editor once needed a product shot, but wanted it in a certain color," says Little. "Our client was not able to accommodate, so I loaded an image of that product into Photoshop and changed the color myself. The image came out great, and coverage was provided, but it was a lot of work."

Another recommended delivery format is via an online press room. Petri Darby, president of DarbyDarnit in Houston, says, "The companies that make it easy for journalists to quickly find what they need, and direct the media to sections of their Web sites specifically tailored with

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story ideas and other content that appeals to that audience, stand to benefit more in the long term than those who just send an e-mail with an image."

As senior PR manager at the Monterey Bay Aquarium, Ken Peterson gets regular requests for photos from a variety of media on an almost daily basis.

"Some of my colleagues, especially with convention and visitor bureaus, have a lot of free art available," Peterson says. "We're more controlling, both because we don't want our images out there and misused or commercialized, and because we want to develop a relationship with the requester."

Jessica Flynn, communications manager for the Tamarack Resort in Idaho, says the resort employs "a resort photographer who takes all of our photos... [and helps establish] a signature look for the resort."

External services are also available, such as PR Newswire's Photo Desk. "We make it easy to locate images by systematically adding metadata information to each image before it's archived," says Sarah Skerik, VP at PRN. "A properly coded and categorized image makes it quite simple for journalists working on a deadline to locate archived images."

Software is available, too. Nelson Vigneault, president of "digital courier" CleanPix, advises, "Journalists prefer custom responses to their requests; that means a photo selection already edited, not your entire collection.

"Most important, they want caption information that is right with the file," Vigneault adds. "A journalist would not risk using a photo and misquoting the visual information, so readily available, accurate captions are paramount."

**Technique Tips**

**DO**

Ask your source what kind of image they want, what format they want it in, and how they want you to deliver it

Find out if they want more than one shot, and offer to send along previews to aid selection

Consider an in-house photographer, or have a professional photographer on retainer

**DON'T**

Send attachments to a source unless requested

Commit to sending art unless you know what the request is and how it will be used

Offer a photo opportunity unless you know in advance that your subject is willing and available to do a photo shoot, possibly on short notice

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