

## “That’s the Way, Uh-Huh Uh-Huh...”

Here’s a selection of e-mail copy that, in our view, captures tech PR pros in their finest hour. Notice the confidence, the courtesy and the grasp of what a story is.

**Be empathetic.** Journalists aren’t sheep. Somehow the pitch needs to recognize their need for efficiency and exclusivity while still being “on message” for the client.

• “I realize the expo is a zoo, and that a lot of people are vying for your time, but while everyone else chases the same story, I thought you might like to see something a little different.”

• “I realize that your time is pretty tight, but I thought he would be a good source for current or future stories you may work on.”

• “Are you going to be at CES? Here’s one reason why you might want to make time for Nokia’s SNAP Mobile team while you’re there.”

• “As you look to cover the technologies coming out of CES 2006, I’d like to highlight an overlooked, yet critical aspect to most of these consumer technologies -- specifically the ability for customer service IT representatives to offer support remotely when they break down.”

**Sell aspirin.** The journalist’s reader is in pain. Do you know what it is, and does your message promise to ease that pain?

• “Your readers use wireless devices like cell phones, smart phones and PDAs to stay efficient

and be reachable any time, anywhere. Unfortunately, many find themselves having to walk outside or to a window just to use their phones.”

• “Have you ever had trouble finding something “good” to watch on TV? Despite having hundreds of channels, that’s a problem most of us encounter regularly.”

• “Interestingly enough, many of the new products announced at CES contribute to hearing loss, which is one of the leading, yet often overlooked, disabilities in the U.S.... the phone can actually recognize human voice and eliminate any unwanted or background noise.”

**Be genteel.** You’re a human being first, then a PR pro. Courtesy works, if you really mean it.

• “I understand you are inundated with CES emails so I will get straight to the point.”

• “If we don’t connect before CES, I hope your trip is safe and hassle free.”

• “I understand you write for Forbes Magazine and thought this might be an interesting idea to share with you. If you are interested, my client will be attending the CES show in Las Vegas and I would love to set up a time for you to meet with Christina Seelye, president and CEO of Avanquest Publishing USA. Please let me know if this is something you would cover and if you would like to arrange a time to meet with Christina. I appreciate your time.”

## CES Pitch E-Mail: Bane of Journalists and PR Pros Alike

For tech journalists and tech PR pros alike, a lot rides on the annual Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas. Almost 150,000 busy professionals find themselves together, perhaps for the only time.

One has to make the most of that, which explains why journalists who registered to cover CES received more than 600 unsolicited e-mail messages from PR pros seeking to announce products, set up interviews and populate parties.

SWMS analyzed 400 of these e-mails and came away empathizing with both journalists and PR

pros. Journalists found themselves spammed at a terribly hectic time. CES is equally busy for PR pros, pressured by clients to show just how connected they are with reporters and analysts.

In this SWMS special report we’ll examine both good and bad practices in using e-mail to pitch journalists. You’ll learn what works and what doesn’t in the words of the editors and analysts themselves.

Tech journalists and PR pros have jobs to do. In some small way, perhaps this research will raise the state of the art in e-mail communications.

## Greetings and Salutations

Hi Sam	68
Dear Sam	52
Sam	32
Hello Sam	18
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Good morning	6
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Sam Whitmore	3
Dear Mr. Whitmore	2
Hello Mr. Whitmore	2
Hey Sam	1
Hi there	1
Jim	1
Happy Friday, Adam	1

Only 45 percent of the CES pitch e-mails we examined contained a salutation. Take a look at the table to the left to see which salutations were used and how often.

The table omits several other one-offs, such as “Dear CES attendee,” “Dear CES media attendee” and “Dear Sir/Madame.”

We’re not sure what it takes to add a personal greeting to a mass-produced pitch, but we are sure that the effort is worth it.