

# Key Tips for Talking to News Professionals

Bryan Schwartzman, Assistant Director of Media & Development Communications at Reconstructing Judaism



**RECONSTRUCTING  
JUDAISM**

Deeply rooted. Boldly relevant.

# A Bit About Me



- I manage media relations, monitoring coverage of Reconstructing Judaism, RRC faculty and students, Reconstructionist rabbis and affiliates, feature stories, podcast host, development of Movement-wide messaging.
- I spent a dozen years as a fulltime journalist, placed internships and freelancing. In 2014, I moved from journalism to media relations and have successfully placed stories/op-eds in local, regional and national publications.

# Why Media Relations are Important

- It's core to our mission: making the case for liberal religion in the public square.
- As Reconstructionists, we believe strongly in democracy, transparency.
- “Earned media” garners the kind of publicity that either you can't or would be very difficult to buy.
- People will find your congregation more easily.
- Members, board members love to see their community highlighted in the news (don't assume they've seen it, share it.)
- Positive news coverage leads to more news coverage.

# What do you do when the media calls?

- Designate someone in your community to oversee responding to inquiries.
- Find out the deadline! What is the story? Assess the risks to your organization.
- If your organization is facing a true crisis or the potential of damaging media coverage, considering using a crisis communications expert.
- Prepare. Think about your messages. Practice if possible.
- Keep in mind that journalists are neither friends nor enemies, be mindful of what you plan to say, but don't be so on guard that you fail to effectively communicate.
- Think slow. Develop three messages you aim to communicate.

# What do I do if the media ignores my congregation?

- It's not just you, it is harder than ever to get media coverage.
- Frame your pitches around larger issues; try to tie your community's programs to a larger trend.
- Make short, timely pitches.
- Build a relationship: send a journalist a compliment, ask for a virtual coffee.
- Consider submitting an op-ed about why your program/issue/initiative matters.

# Example Pitch to Press

Mr. Max,

I'd like to simultaneously submit an op-ed and inform you of a Jan. 26 program related to homelessness in NYC, featuring the Manhattan borough president and several City Council members, as well as Jewish clergy and policy experts.

The attached piece is by Eric Rosenbaum, CEO of Project Renewal, a leading NYC nonprofit serving the homeless. The essay articulates a clear policy agenda, advocating for increased government and community support of neighborhood shelters. It also examines how individuals should respond when approached on the street by homeless individuals. The piece references the Jan. 26 Upper West Side program organized by Reconstructing Judaism, an international progressive Jewish organization. (Mr. Rosenbaum is the keynote speaker.) Would it be possible to let me know by 1 p.m. on 1/16 if the piece is under consideration? Here's the lowdown on the program itself. Of course, a staff writer from the Gotham Gazette is welcome to attend.

Bryan Schwartzman

Related Article

[Gotham Gazette - Following Our Faith, Marshaling Our Resources to Solve Homelessness in New York City](#)

# Resources

Article on Reconstructing Judaism website:

[Reconstructing Judaism - Key Tips for Talking to News Professionals](#)

Previous article by Bryan on eJewishPhilanthropy:

[eJewish Philanthropy - Media Relations 101 for Nonprofits](#)

Tips for pitching to journalists

[Muck Rack Blog – How to pitch in 2020, backed up by statistics](#)

How Bryan highlights Reconstructionist affiliates through journalism:

[Reconstructing Judaism - Reconstructionist Affiliates, Rabbis Push for More Just Immigration System](#)

[Reconstructing Judaism - Reconstructionist Communities Make Disability Inclusion a Top Priority](#)

# Examples of Reconstructionist News Coverage

[Jewish Week - The False Choice Between Safety and the Economy](#)

[Jewish Telegraphic Agency - 'We Stand in Solidarity': Jewish organizations respond to the protests over George Floyd's death](#)

[Jewish Week - What Does it Mean to be a Leader? Inspiration from Jewish Disability Advocacy Day](#)

[Could A Third Israeli Election Hinge On Religious Pluralism?](#)

[The Forward - High turnout at virtual Rosh Hashanah leaves rabbis relieved, but money woes persist](#)

# Recent Examples of Affiliate News Coverage

[Jewish Chronicle - Congregations reflect on what's needed at the two-year mark](#)

[Jewish Telegraphic Agency – How Ruth Bader Ginsburg went from the Notorious RBG to Ruth the Tzaddik](#)

[Pix11 New York - Long Island synagogue inspired by NY Mets, gets cardboard cutouts of congregation for Rosh Hashanah](#)

[Chron. - Rosh Hashanah is usually when Jews gather in synagogue. This year, they're mostly online - or masked and spread out](#)

[Arizona Jewish Post – Amid a national recokining over race, Jews are embracing Juneteenth](#)

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