



Getting coverage in women's magazines

Plan ahead

Don't forget that weekly magazines will begin to research ideas about three months before the publication of an issue, and will start putting it together six to seven weeks before. Monthlies plan four or more months in advance. Submit your information in sufficient time. If you don't, another organisation will.

Read newspapers

As a starting point it is essential that you read a range of national, regional and local papers in order to get an idea of the current trends and ideas being published.

Keep up to date

Be aware of, and draw ideas from any national months, weeks or days that may be relevant to a particular story. Examples could be Adult Learner's Week or Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

Mark your calendar

You need to take account of anniversaries, not just as a direct link to a story, but equally as a hook for other stories. The tenth anniversary of the Channel Tunnel, for example, might be the starting point for a story about British women living, working or studying in France.

Read the magazine you want to target

Do this so that you can target your story. For example, don't try and sell a story about childhood skin cancer risks to a magazine mainly read by single women. You could tell them how to be safe in the sun instead.

Keep close to the human angle

For the article to get printed, you need to involve personal case histories about people who are prepared to be interviewed, photographed and featured in the magazine. Make sure you have a ready supply of appropriate people, where possible matching the age range and profile of the magazine's readership.

Get in touch with the right person

To find out who you need to speak to, whether it's the features editor, the health editor or another relevant person, you need to read the magazine in question. If the editors' names aren't printed, don't be afraid to phone the magazine and ask for the name and phone number or email address of the person with whom you want to get in touch.

Photos

Don't send photos by post, because they are likely to get lost. It's better to say that they will be available at request. Nowadays most photos are used from photo libraries, the exception being those used for real life stories or case studies, for which photos of the actual people involved are preferred to those posed by actors.

Pitfalls

Be sure to consider any possible downsides of having your article published, before you submit it to a magazine. Will you be able to cope with the response? It's great seeing your telephone number in print, but do you have the means to handle phone calls from thousands of women?



If your story is especially good, it may end up on the front cover. You need to ensure that any people used in case histories are both aware of and prepared for this eventuality.

Establish a contact point

Finally, you should consider designating one of your press officers, or anyone else suitable, as a contact point for women's magazines. This person will then be able to get a feel for the needs of different magazine editors and should soon build up a rapport with them. Over time s/he can become a trusted and reliable source of stories and information.