

EIGHT STORIES THAT WORKED AND WHY

- *Examples for journalists, media and communication professionals*

How dog-sharing became a solution to 'pandemic puppy' problems

The Sydney Morning Herald,
August 11, 2023

I never expected this to be on page 3 of the Saturday Sydney Morning Herald, and it stayed on the lifestyle homepage for a couple of days, too. It came out of me identifying a potential trend while staying with my sister and a friend. I pitched an editor with one case study, then found the rest through contacting organisations.



Lauren Healy and Genie Pepper share their dog-sitting duties.
PHOTO BY BROOK MITCHELL

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Girls attending a reusable sanitary pad making session in Ethiopia.
PHOTO BY TADESSE /UNICEF ETHIOPIA/CC BY_NC_ND

Are DIY menstrual pads an unsustainable trend?

Devex, January 26, 2023

This did well for Devex and sparked conversation in the menstrual health space. It was pitched to an editor after a social enterprise came to me with some anecdotal evidence and a study.

Quiet Hours, Curfews, and *Chores*? Why the Tide May Be Turning Against Airbnb

Fodor's, September 29, 2022

This came out of a Tweet and I then did a callout on social media to find experts who I could interview for timely comment and research for this Fodor's piece.

Can the Grammy Awards make chant music go mainstream?

The i paper, January 31, 2023

Coinciding with the Grammys, so there was a timely news hook there, this was featured on the homepage of the i paper in the UK. This was originally sparked by meeting a woman looking at chanting for her PhD in my hometown. Over the years I wrote about the subject for the ABC and The Saturday Paper in Australia. ABC Radio interviewed the source separately for a radio story.

[Uganda hip hop TV presenters rapping the news](#)

The Guardian, June 10, 2015

I nearly lost count of how many times I wrote this story. Editors loved it and one from NPR approached me about writing it, not the other way around. Picked up by The Guardian after I wrote it for AFP, this story went gangbusters. I also wrote versions for Take Part, and IPS.

[Africa's hit science show for kids is coming to the US](#)

NPR Goats & Soda,
February 5, 2021

This piece went gangbusters, with Johns Hopkins University mentioning it in their newsletter after I wrote for NPR Goats & Soda. It helped that it was a positive story and I was working with an NGO that is great to work with and always has talent ready to be interviewed. It helped also that I could speak to an independent expert for an opinion on this.



Pastor Peter Sewakiryanga and George, 5.
PHOTO BY PAUL HARRIS

[Ugandan survivor finds hope in Australia](#)

The Sydney Morning Herald,
May 12, 2012

I had to follow up this pitch with the foreign editor, and I never expected it to be on page one of the Saturday Sydney Morning Herald. It came from a story that I found in a local paper in Uganda.



[How 3D printing can revolutionise the medical profession](#)

The Guardian,
September 29, 2015

Long before the pandemic and 3D masks, I reported on this from Cambodia and it was featured on the homepage of The Guardian. It helped that I had good photos.

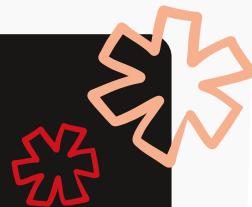


Cambodian woman Leakhena Laing being fitted for a new device at CSPO private clinic.
PHOTO BY AMY FALLON

LESSONS TO TAKE AWAY

— *from finding and pitching stories*

- Look for topical news hooks
- Always follow up, politely with editors and at a time that works for them
- Have high resolution photos ready to go
- Good news works
- “Solutions journalism” works
- It’s worth keeping an eye on local newspapers for stories to pitch and to see what they’re covering
- Have sources, case studies and other talent ready to go
- Realise that you and your organisation may be part of a bigger story and pitch with this in mind. Most publicity is likely to be better than no publicity. You may be more likely to get a story across the line if you suggest other organisations, partners and independent experts who you can speak to on the topic as editors may want these.



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