

E-Mail Subject Lines ■ The vast majority of pitches today are sent to editors, reporters, television producers, and bloggers via e-mail. Consequently, probably the most important aspect of the pitch is the subject line. If it doesn't generate interest and curiosity on the part of the receiver as they quickly scan hundreds of e-mails, it's deleted without a second thought. Such a challenge requires a lot of creativity on the part of the publicist to come up with a good subject line. Ragan.com compiled a list of creative subject lines that generated media stories. Here are some examples:

- "Call it a display of Howly Muttrimony sealed with a sniff." (Story about a dog wedding at a shopping center staged as a benefit for an animal rescue group.)
- "The Man Who Will End iPod Whiplash." (Story about an engineer who created a new technique for searching music online.)
- "Wearing Prada Can Be the Devil for Your Spine." (Story from a hospital involved in spinal therapy about women injuring their spines by lugging around ever-larger designer handbags.)
- "Weather to Pack Sunscreen or an Umbrella." (Story about a new online weather service and its trip planner services.)
- "Veggies for Dessert? Blue Cheese Gelato!!" (Story about new fruit and vegetable flavors for an ice cream store chain.)
- "New Book Says Hormones May be Making You Fat." (Story about a weight loss program authored by a chiropractor.)

Not all subject lines, however, need to be creative and clever. An informative subject line, such as "Free Public Hurricane Seminar Tomorrow Night at Nauticus," satisfies the key word requirement and tells the receiver exactly what the story is about. As Margo Mateas, president of the Public Relations Training Company writes in *PR Tactics*, "Writing a powerful media pitch doesn't take a lot of words. It takes a lot of thought and planning. Put your effort into being succinct and concise, and it will pay off." See the Tips for Success on page 159 for more guidelines for writing an e-mail pitch.

The Telephone Pitch ■ Despite the popularity of e-mail, it still remains somewhat impersonal and easy to ignore. Consequently, a case can be made for actually picking up the phone and having a real-time conversation with an editor or journalist. As Susan Balcom Walton and Nick Kalm explain in *PR Tactics*, "Pitching a story face-to-face, or at least voice-to-voice, can help develop stronger journalist relation-