



Standing out from the crowd:

Engaging with the media to tell your story

Nov. 8, 2023

Amanda Gibbs, OHSU Knight Cancer Institute Communications Manager

What we'll cover today...

- A little background on me – 5 minutes
- Tips for pitching – 10 minutes
- Tips for interviews – 10 minutes
- Story examples & key takeaways – 15 minutes
- Questions

My background:



About my role at OHSU:

I manage the OHSU Knight Cancer Institute communications team, which covers:

- Internal comms
- External comms – the web, science blog, patient stories, social media, and more
- Media relations



A fun fact about me:

I still get excited every time a story publishes/airs/goes to print!





Tips to prepare your pitch

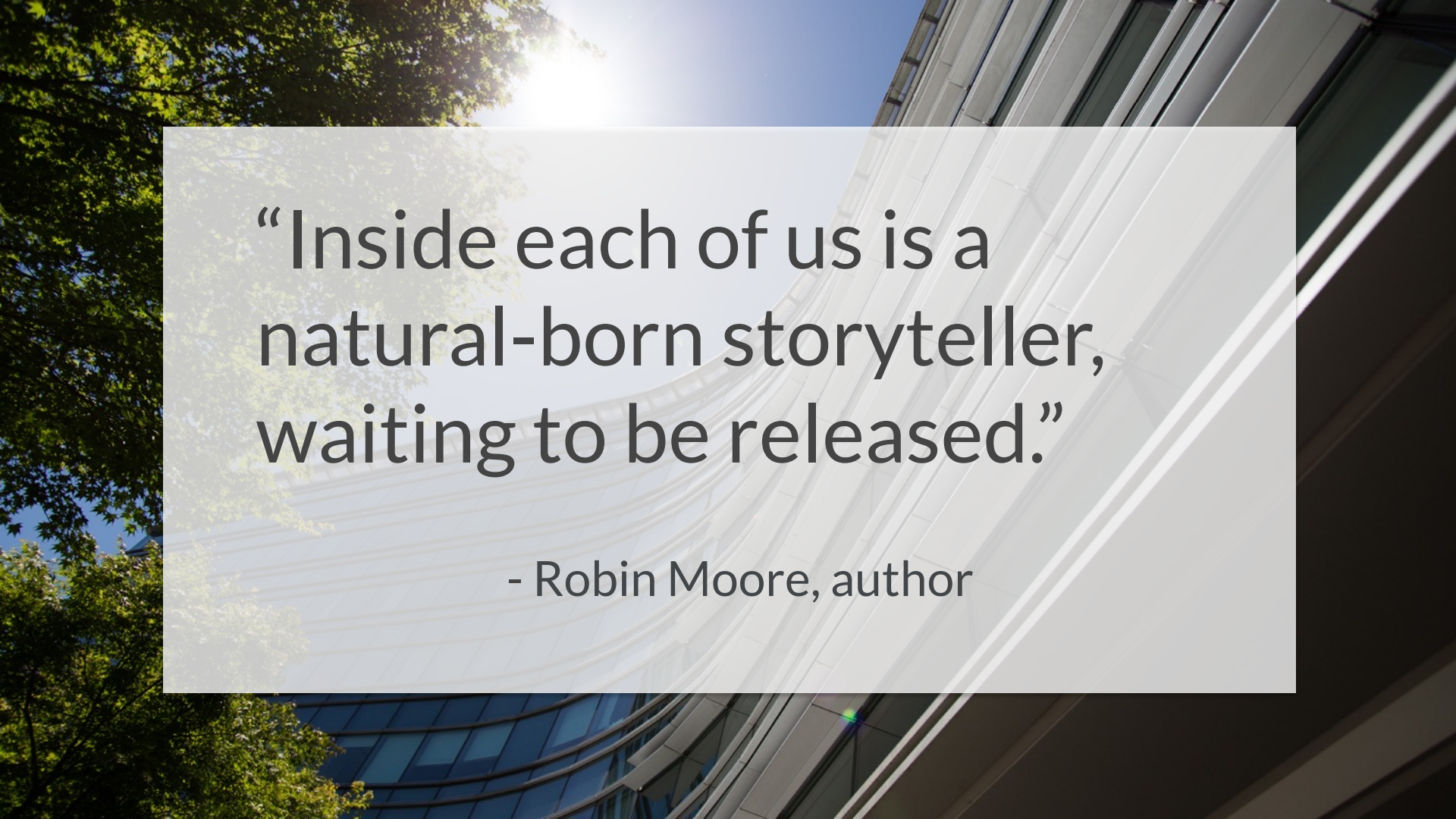
Before you send a pitch, give some thought to:

- Why do you want media to tell this story? (Tip: because someone asked you to usually isn't good enough!)
- What's unique about this? Has the story already been told?
- Is there a news hook your story could be tied to?
- Is there a local/regional tie?
- Why would someone watching/reading/listening at home care?



Tips for pitching

- Do your homework on the media outlet/reporter.
- Make it short and sweet—you don't have to share everything at once, just pique their interest.
- Could you give this reporter an exclusive?
- What visuals do you have to share? This matters to ALL media outlets.
- Keep your pitches authentic to your voice.



“Inside each of us is a natural-born storyteller, waiting to be released.”

- Robin Moore, author



Interview tips & tricks (pt. 1)

- Practice, practice, practice (no matter who it is, we all benefit from practice).
- Rehearse the knot-in-your-stomach question because it's not so scary if you're ready for it!
- Educate the reporter behind-the-scenes; it can be helpful, even if those quotes aren't used/don't air.



Interview tips & tricks (pt. 2)

- Create three key messages you want to share in the interview, no matter what questions are asked.
- Tailor your messaging to the medium/audience.
- If you can't think of something in the moment, don't guess—you can always follow-up (unless it's live).
- Use a typical final question – “Is there anything I've missed/anything else you'd like to cover?” – to your advantage.

Media examples from OHSU

Online article: “The survivors: How an experimental treatment saved patients and changed medicine” – *STAT* (national online health publication)

Key takeaways:

- Playing the long game
- Giving the right reporter a lot of access – and an exclusive!
- The power of visuals



Media examples from OHSU

KGW-TV news story: “Cancer research could speed up at OHSU after \$1 million grant funds equipment to reproduce organs”

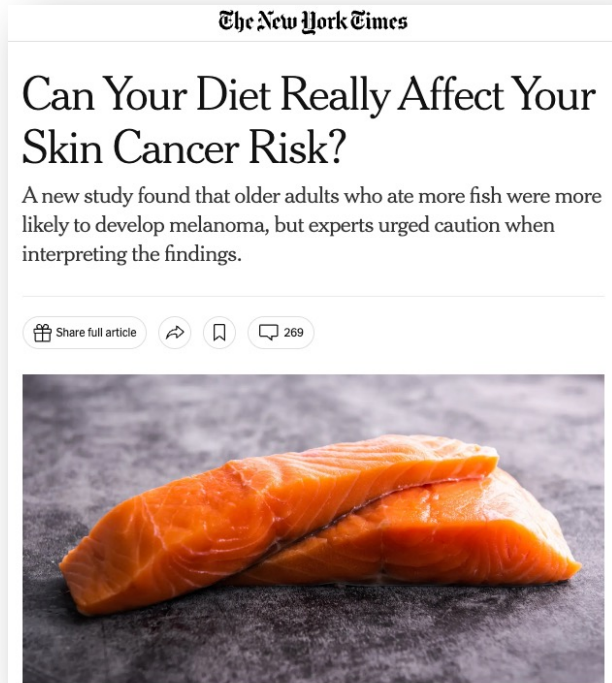


Key takeaways from the KGW story:

- Tailor messaging for your audience
- Educate the reporter behind-the-scenes
- Use a news hook – in this case, new grant funding – to make your story feel timely



Media examples from OHSU



Key takeaways:

- Jump on the topical stories/reactive requests—your experts can add value
- But make sure they read the study(!)
- Take the bait to share your messaging...

...because it just might be included!

[Check your skin](#) regularly for any spots that seem to be new, changing or unusual, and see a doctor if you find something concerning, Dr. Leachman said. “If you see something that looks funny, don’t just blow it off,” she said. “The earlier you can get it checked, the better off you’re going to be.”



Media examples from OHSU

KGW-TV news story: “OHSU Knight Cancer Institute’s Community Partnership Program focuses on funding for underserved communities”



Media examples from OHSU

Key takeaways:

- Collaborate with wonderful partners, when you can – thank you to Angela Brown, Sharetta Watson and Blanca Cisneros!
- Hone in on how this will help the community – I pitched the reporter the specifics
- Cite compelling data, i.e. “Black people have the highest death rate and shortest survival of any racial/ethnic group in the United States for most cancers. For example, black women are 41% more likely to die from breast cancer than white women, despite a lower incidence of the disease, [according to the American Cancer Society.](#)”

What do you all think? What did you notice about this story or others?

“Marketing is no longer about the stuff that you make, but about the stories you tell.”

— Seth Godin, author, entrepreneur, marketer, and public speaker



Questions?



Have questions about telling your story?
Feel free to reach out! gibbam@ohsu.edu



Thank You!