

The Pet PR Playbook

*10 story angles journalists actually cover, and
how to spot yours*

01 02 03 04 05 06 07 08 09 10

Why most pet businesses get no press

It isn't that journalists don't care about pets. Pet stories are some of the best-read pieces in national news, every time. It's that most businesses pitch announcements. "We launched." "We raised." Journalists don't cover announcements. They cover stories.

The ten angles below are the ones that get picked up. You've probably got three of them sitting in your company right now without realising it.

TWO LABELS

Two labels run through this guide. **In practice** is work I've done and the coverage it produced. **Looks like** is the shape of the angle, so you can picture yours.

01

The data story

You know things about British pet owners that nobody else does. Search patterns, spending habits, seasonal spikes, the odd stuff buried in your product data. You also sit on public numbers your sector has stopped noticing. Either way, a number a journalist can't get anywhere else is still the fastest route into national coverage.

IN PRACTICE

"Since 2019, pet scams have cost the UK £2.5m, according to *Action Fraud*, and most of them start on social media." That one number opened the door. The campaign it anchored took my client PetProov to 158 pieces of coverage and 20.4 million reach.

DO IT

Pull your five most surprising numbers. Ask which one would make a stranger at a dinner party say "wait, really?" That's your headline.

The founder origin story

02

Not your CV. The moment. The dog you lost, the scam you fell for, the vet bill that shocked you into building the thing. Journalists cover people, and business desks in particular love a founder who built the fix for their own problem.

LOOKS LIKE

“My puppy died of something preventable. So I built the thing that could have saved her.”

DO IT

Write the honest 100-word version of why you started, with the actual moment in it. If it makes you well up writing it, it will land with a journalist reading it.

The reactive comment

03

When a pet story breaks, a scandal, a recall, new legislation, something going viral, journalists need a quote fast. Whoever is quickest, sharpest and easiest to reach becomes the voice of the sector.

IN PRACTICE

When the Oasis reunion set off a wave of ticket-touting headlines, I made sure my client Twickets was inside the coverage rather than a footnote to it.

DO IT

Decide now which two or three topics you're entitled to speak on. Draft your position on each before the story breaks, so when it does you're answering in minutes rather than scrambling for a day.

04

The seasonal hook

Pet journalism runs on a calendar. Puppy season, fireworks night, Christmas chocolate warnings, summer heatwaves, holiday pet-sitting. These pieces get written every year without fail. The only thing that changes is who's quoted in them.

IN PRACTICE

I helped Monster Pet Supplies make the UK's first dog-friendly Christmas wrapping paper, and own the season across *The Times*, the *Daily Mail*, *Metro* and the *Evening Standard*.

DO IT

Map your product against the calendar. Pick the two moments that are genuinely yours to own, and have the story ready a month before you need it.

05

The trend piece

Journalists love a “this is a thing now” story. Telehealth for pets, raw food, dog DNA tests, insurance for exotics. Your growth numbers are the proof the trend is real, which makes you the case study inside someone else’s piece.

IN PRACTICE

Remote vet care was the trend, and Jooi was the evidence. 130 pieces in eight months, past 10,000 downloads, and into *TechCrunch*’s top 50, starting from pre-launch.

DO IT

Name the trend you’re evidence of. If a journalist wrote that piece tomorrow, which of your numbers would they need in it? Have it ready to hand over.

The consumer-protection story

06

Scams, dodgy breeders, fake reviews, overpriced cover, unsafe products. If your business protects pet owners from something, you're already on the right side of one of the most reliable stories in consumer journalism.

IN PRACTICE

PetProov's whole platform is built on protecting buyers from puppy fraud. That's *This Morning* territory by design, and that's where it went.

DO IT

Finish this sentence. "Nobody is protecting pet owners from ____."
If your product is the answer, take it straight to a consumer desk.

The David and Goliath

07

A small business takes on a big incumbent. The challenger vet chain, the insurer doing what the legacy players won't, the marketplace undercutting the giants. Business journalists can't resist it.

LOOKS LIKE

“The five-person startup taking on the £4bn pet insurance industry.”

DO IT

Name your Goliath out loud. What can you do that they can't or won't? Be ready to defend it on the record, because you will be asked.

08

The milestone with meaning

A raise or a launch isn't a story on its own, it's a paragraph. Tied to something bigger, it's a story. Money plus mission gets covered. Money alone gets ignored.

LOOKS LIKE

Not “we raised £2m” but “we raised £2m to end puppy farming, and here’s how.”

DO IT

For your next milestone, write the second half of the sentence: “which means ___ for pet owners.” Pitch that half, not just the number.

The counterintuitive take

09

The piece that pushes against the room, from someone who's earned the right to say it. "Most dog tech is junk," from a wearables founder. Editors love a contrarian they can trust.

LOOKS LIKE

"I run a pet food company, and I think you're overfeeding your dog."

DO IT

What does everyone in your sector believe that you privately think is wrong? Said carefully, that's an opinion piece, and probably your easiest coverage this quarter.

10

The picture story

Sometimes the story is just that the images are irresistible. Pets are the most photographed thing on the internet. If your product produces footage or photos that are genuinely charming, that alone can carry coverage.

LOOKS LIKE

A GPS tracker startup releases heatmaps of where cats actually go at night, it runs as a full picture spread, and the product name sits in the caption every time.

DO IT

What does your product let people see that they almost never get to see? If it makes anyone smile, that's a picture desk pitch. Send it.

What to do with these

Pick the three angles that feel most like your business. For each, write the headline you wish already existed. That's your press plan. Everything after that is craft, contacts and timing.

That's the part I do.

Jessica Maccio

Two decades in digital PR, now focused on pet brands. Over 450 pieces of coverage for pet sector brands so far. PetProov onto *This Morning* and into *The Guardian*. Joii from pre-launch into *TechCrunch*'s top 50. I work embedded in your team, senior only, none of the agency overhead.

If one of these angles made you think
“that's us”, let's talk.

Book 15 minutes: <https://calendly.com/jessicamaccio/free-pr-discovery-call>

Or email: hello@jessicamaccio.com

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