# Factory floor Reporting constructively

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**Handout**

**Pitching Guidelines**

You’ll need a strong pitch to sell your story idea to editors. The pitch should summarize the proposed story, explain its importance and relevance, how it’ll be produced and why you’re the best person to tackle it. Here are some tips.

**Preliminary interviews:** Talk to themain characters before submitting the pitch. Be clear with your interviewees that you’re researching a story and don’t promise that they’ll appear on TV/the radio/the paper, etc.

**A story, not a topic!** “I want to report about sextortion” is the wrong approach – it’s vague and lacks detail. A good pitch would talk about how sextortion survivors in Syria have launched online initiatives to help other victims. Be specific and have characters.

**Keep it short:** The pitch should be brief, 250 words max. Documentary filmmakers ideally send both a brief pitch/synopsis and a longer proposal of two to five pages. A snappy headline – but not sensationalistic – can make your submission stand out in the pitch pile.

**No assumed knowledge:** When pitching to foreign publications/editors, don’t assume they know a lot about your country or community. Explain the basics of the story and why it matters.

**Get the facts straight:** Fact-checking is part and parcel of any piece of journalism, whether it’s breaking news or an Instagram story.

**Information sources:** Unless it’s an opinion piece, editors want to know about the sources of the information that is given in the pitch. Link to them.

**Can you deliver?** Journalists shouldn’t mention that they’ll get interviews with big names in their pitches unless they really have that kind of access.

**Work samples:** The pitch should contain links to previous pieces you’ve done or attach a few to your email. Examples of previous constructive stories are even better.

**Is it a good story?** If it’s difficult to give a brief summary of the proposed story or you’re bored just writing it, ask yourself if it’s worth pitching.

**The basics:** Don’t forget a phone number and email address in the email signature. Include links to pieces you’ve done previously so the editor can quickly vet your work. Check back in a week if you haven’t heard anything. Always stay professional.

*Thinking by Sumit Saengthong from NounProject.com*