

# How to write a press release

7 simple steps to writing the best press releases

How to write a press release!

We often find businesses get in a tangle when attempting to write a press release for circularisation to target media. In this article we touch on some of the key points to consider when constructing a press release.

- Is it news?
- Is it relevant to the publications' readers?
- Is it written in journalistic style?
- Is your information concise and absolutely clear in meaning?
- Your media list and availability of nominated spokespeople
- Use of photographs
- Following up

To give yourself the best possible chance of being published, it's important to present your press release clearly and concisely and ensure that the information contained within the release is fine-tuned per publication – this will make sure it is relevant to the readers of those publications.

The following takes a practical look at how companies should construct press releases to give them the best chance of gaining coverage and building relationships with editors and journalists.

When writing a press release, there are a number of simple rules to follow.

Make sure you can answer the following questions about your subject matter, in the affirmative:-

Is it news?

The most important rule is that the any press release you issue must be newsworthy and interesting to the editor you have targeted - otherwise it will be 'filed' and you will not have made best use of your time.

Is it relevant to the publications' readers?

An editor will only publish your press release, or run a story based upon it, if he or she feels it is relevant to the publication's hard won readership.

With this in mind, always write your press release to an audience of one - the editor, or news editor, of the publication (or program) you are targeting. If you think that an editor of a specific publication has a different view as to what is relevant in comparison with other publications, adapt the press release to fit the style of the publication concerned. A tailored press release is more likely to be published - it shows you have thought about the readership and the sort of slant the publication usually puts on its news items.

Is it written in journalistic style?

Could your press release be justifiably printed exactly as you have scripted it? If you believe it could be transferred directly onto the page of your

target publications, you have a good chance of being published. Check the news pages of the publications on your media list and follow the style if you want the best results!

Is your information concise and absolutely clear in meaning?

As you will see when you read any published news item, you need to get to the facts early and you need to cover the essentials of the story:

- Who
- What
- When
- Where
- Why

These can be covered in any order but, as a general rule, they do need to be covered if you can be certain to have recorded all the facts. The example press release linked to this instalment is based entirely on the basic information set out below:

- who - Acme Products
- what - Two new products launched
- when - 1st March 2010
- where - Alice Springs
- why - Servicing customer demand

Your media list and availability of nominated spokespeople

Always include a contact name at the end of your press release, so that more information, or a different comment, can be requested by the editor or journalist the editor has asked to take up the story. Remember to make it easy for journalists to get in touch with you at all times.

Use of photographs

A photograph can help your press release to be published, if it is relevant to your story. If you do have a photograph, always include a copy with each emailed copy of your press release for viewing purposes – that way editors can see if the shot aids the story.

Following up

Many firms do all the work to produce a well-written press release, invest in quality photography and prepare a well-researched media list and wonder why nothing is published. It is important to call all journalists that you have sent the press release to in order to gauge their level of interest. Very often this is the key to having your news published. The journalist you speak to may have a question or two that you can answer on the spot – or he or she may have misunderstood some of the contents – either way, the follow up call completes the cycle and assists you with getting to know the journalist/s better. If you don't get published this time, next time around you will have learned something in terms of what journalist A or journalist B is looking for in a news piece. Most importantly, persist and persevere because your ongoing media relations campaigning will ultimately produce results – and will show journalists that you and your firm can be relied upon to supply information, commentary and articles when required.

In a Nutshell:

Press Release Tips

Is your story newsworthy?

Tailor your press releases to different publications to ensure they are relevant

Record the facts in a single sheet whenever possible

Always chase up your press releases with a telephone call to ensure they have been received

Invest in quality accompanying photography

Well written, newsworthy Press Releases are welcomed by editors; they can lead to considerable objective exposure for businesses within trade, local and national media.

For more information please contact James Officer at StrategyCo on +61 (03) 8399 9513 or alternatively [james.officer@strategyco.net](mailto:james.officer@strategyco.net)

#### **Contacts**

James Officer

+61 (03) 8399 9513

[mailto: james.officer@strategyco.net](mailto:james.officer@strategyco.net)