

How to Write a Press Release (Portions taken from ereleases.com)

Planning Begins Before You Write a Press Release

While no one can guarantee your press release will be published or used for an article, there are things you can do to improve your press release success. The biggest obstacle to most press releases is the actual press release itself.

When writing a press release, it should be:

Concise - editors receive hundreds of press releases a week (perhaps more) and appreciate releases that are brief and to the point.

Well-written - a good way to ensure your press release ends up in the waste basket is: bad spelling, poor grammar, and illogical or unsubstantiated claims. Ask your friends and family to read your press release. Read your own press release aloud.

Factual - stick to logical and substantiated claims, avoiding statements of belief: we're the best, the cheapest, etc.

Honest - avoid the padded quotes by company officers; even if they are experts, they come across as biased, especially in a press release about your company. If used, stick to the facts.

Timely - if your press release isn't topical, consider incorporating it with a recent news event -- but don't stretch it.

Questions to Consider Before You Write a Press Release:

Who is the preferred audience of your press release?

What do you want readers to take away from your press release?

What does your press release provide: invaluable information or just another offer?

What is the support or justification for the information in your press release?

What is the tone of your press release?

Are you aware of possible pitfalls or areas to avoid in your press release?

What do you want to accomplish with your press release: increase business, disseminate information, or both?

Essential Tips to Press Release Success

1. Ensure your press release is newsworthy.
2. Your headline should be concise and compelling while avoiding being cute or sensational.
3. Brevity is not only allowed, it is encouraged and rewarded. It shows you respect the time of busy editors & reporters. If they require more information, they will ask.
4. Stick to the facts. Don't be afraid to pull statistics from respected third-parties if applicable.
8. Provide as much contact information as possible: name, address, phone, fax, email, website. An after-hours number or cellphone can make the difference when you have a journalist under deadline.
9. Identify editors and reporters who would be most interested in what you have to say.
10. Choose your media list carefully. If sending via e-mail, be sure the editors and reporters accept press releases via email. Also, avoid attachments and large media files unless requested

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE OUTLINE

Title (Example: Local Advocates Speak out on Damaging Policy Changes)

City, State (Example: Miami, FL) - This is the introductory paragraph, and it should briefly summarize the entire press release. The paragraph should be approximately 3 to 5 sentences. Be sure to mention what's happening or what happened, the date, time, where it happened, and the important people involved. The 1st paragraph will make or break the story. If it's not clear and concise, most people will not read the rest of the article.

The middle paragraphs go into more detail. For example, explain the importance of the event and why it's taking place. This is a good place to provide detail about the participants, who stands to benefit, who stands to lose, etc. In general, remember that most important information should be placed at the beginning of the article - information at the end is less likely to be read. Be sure to answer who, what, when, where, why, and how.

Another section could discuss the history of the particular event, program, or news event. This is where you'll go in detail about how it got started and what services have been offered in the past. Discuss how things are changing for the better (or worse). Once again, you should keep paragraphs at about 3 to 5 sentences in length.

The very last paragraph is called the "boilerplate." It is usually no more than 3-4 sentences. Example: The A Team of Central Wisconsin was formed to **Unite** persons with disabilities and their family members to **advocate** in a grassroots effort, create **awareness** in the community and **advise** those who care for our citizens with special needs; ensuring service choices are protected and sustained.

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Media Contact:
Person Name
Phone Number
E-mail
Website