



How to: write a press release

A press release is the most commonly used form of communication to inform journalists of your activities. It is free and can be an extremely powerful medium to communicate with your target audience. It can be more effective and credible than advertising if approached correctly.

Key points:

Media: Research your local media: newspapers, radio stations and groups. You'll find out what topics they discuss/ key news items that may relate to yours. Also who their key audiences are and whether it is an appropriate medium for you to reach yours.

Contacts: Try to find out who your contact is. Some newspapers and radio stations share the same news desk so you don't want to annoy anyone with duplication.

Method of communication: How are you sending your release? If its by email put the body of the text in your email without any attachments and images. Many email clients block attachments and emails from free email accounts.

Follow up: Make sure you follow up your release with a phone call. It would be a shame for your letter or email to have been misplaced and it also gives the journalist an opportunity to give more information without any leg work.

Timely: Make sure your communication is appropriately timed. News has to be new. There may be no point in releasing information on events that have already happened. Key interest stories revolve around human interest, controversy and scandal, unusual and quirky events, local celebrities or local view points.

Feel of document: Write in the third person and be aware of the tone of voice and style you use is appropriate to your target audience.

Last minute checks: Proof read your entry before sending for: Spelling mistakes, use of unnecessary words or acronyms, contradictions or inconsistencies, accuracy of facts, figures, dates, people and places

Here is a press release template

This is a sample of what your press release should look like. This can be downloaded in a word document for ease of use.



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (DATE) (release the story as soon as received)

or

EMBARGOED FOR (TIME/DATE) (allow a certain time to prepare)

Contact information: This is important, even though it maybe on your letterhead somewhere it will be expected here. Given the name and title of the main spokesperson, phone and fax number. Try to use a number that is accessible out of hours.

HEADLINE Use a bold typeface to emphasise a catchy, short headline.

Photo opportunity: For an event, is there an opportunity to take photos: Who, where when etc. If the key contact is different from above then include it here.

Dateline: Dated for the day it will land on the journalists desk and the town in which the press applies to.

Body of text: Try to keep this down to 2 pages at the max, preferably 4 good paragraphs. 1st paragraph: Like the synopsis of the back of a book, this paragraph needs to grab attention and hold it through the relevant, but basic, information. Try to follow the 5 W's: who, what when, where and why. Try to keep it short and sweet.

Main body: This where your story can develop fully. Flesh out the story that you summarised in the 1st paragraph.

Last paragraphs: Quotes, facts and figures to add authority and interest to your story. Try not to go overboard though and keep under a handful of spokes people. Add more in-depth information here that the journalist can use to add depth to the article if they wish.

If your story follows on to another page be sure to write at the bottom "more follows" or similar to ensure that all your information is read. Make sure all the pages are numbered and identification is on every page so that if separated they can be easily **sourced**.

When you are finished – finalise it with **ENDS**.

Note to editor: This is where you can note down additional information that may be relevant for example additional photos, quotations or success stories.

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Your company name
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Company Street,
Companyville,
Companyshire, CO1 1NY

Website: www.companyname.co.uk
Email: enquires@compnayname.co.uk
Customer services: 0800 000 000

V.A.T number: 888 0000 00
Company registration: 8881880