



## Writing a Press Release

### Considerations before you start

To increase the chance of having a story published, make the editors', freelancers', reporters' or journalists' job easier by presenting the release in a format and style that is familiar to them.

### Considerations before writing the press release

1. Why the release is being written: to broadcast information, increase business, update target audiences?
2. Who is the audience?
3. Does the press release contain invaluable or newsworthy information that will be used by the target audience?
4. Is there a just cause for release of the information that you wish to broadcast?
5. What do you want recipients to take away from the press release?

### Overall tone and structure of the press release

1. Content - ensure that the release is grammatically correct, doesn't contain any spelling mistakes or errors of syntax, and that sources are quoted correctly.
2. Concise - keep it punchy and don't use unnecessary flowery language e.g. cutting-edge, revolutionary.
3. Factual - present the information for distribute that is true, correct and doesn't embellish anything that to be communicated.
4. Objectivity - virtually impossible to do, but refrain from using over-hyped quotes from sources as they will be considered to be biased.
5. Timing - The press release may not be topical, but it may be able to incorporate the release with a more recent news event.

### Writing the press release

1. Collate and Organise Your Facts.

A simple rule is to find answers to questions pertaining to the who, what, when, where, why - the 5 Ws of the event (and don't forget 'how'). Put a date on the release and remember, yesterday's news isn't going to go far.

2. Identify Your Story's Angle.

A good story angle must have the following three attributes: ·

- It must be the most important fact in your story
- It must be timely
- It must be unique, newsworthy or contrary to industry norms and trends.

This story angle must be presented in the first paragraph as well as the headline of your press release.

### 3. Create a Catchy Headline.

Keep the headline short and simple using fewer than ten words. It should convey the key point raised in the opening paragraph in a light-hearted manner that catches their imagination and attention.

For example: Headline: Creative Leicestershire Launches Press Release Information Sheet. If the release is for immediate release, then say so and make this clear i.e. FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE.

### 4. Writing in Third-Person Voice.

A press release must be presented objectively from a third person point of view. Some of the guidelines are listed below: · refrain from using any sales pitch in your press release. · remove "you", "I", "we" and "us" and replace them with "he" and "they". · provide references to any statistics, facts and figures raised in the press release. · refrain from expressing personal opinions, unless they are done in quotes. · draw conclusions from facts and statistics only - not general opinion.

### 5. Provide "Quotes" From the Newsmakers.

Put the most important message down into a quote. Journalists always use quotes from the newsmakers to add an authoritative voice to their reports. If the press release contains quotes that are important and relevant to the story, chances are high that they will be replicated in full in the published article.

### 6. Provide Additional Background Information.

End the press release with an appendix that provides brief background information on the company, newsmakers, as well as who to contact for further information. Summary: The above writing tips are not meant to be an exhaustive guide to writing a good press release. But, it should help you get started on writing a press release yourself. Remember that practice makes perfect and the best way to learn how to write an effective press release, is to observe how business news is reported in the business section of newspapers.

## **Construction and Distribution**

1. Construction. In general a press release shouldn't be more than one page long.

2. Physical Format. Separate the sections clearly to make sure that the recipient can access the information that they need effectively. Use something similar to below and stick to a format:

---BEGINS---

Let the journalist know where they should start.

---ENDS---

Let the journalist know where the release finishes.

---NOTES FOR EDITORS---

Extra information about the topic, company, etc., e.g. summary of the companies activities, how long they have been established.

---CONTACT---

Name, title, address, phone number, fax, e-mail and websites address if the journalist needs more information or more quotes.

---SENDER---

Most writers will recognise ##### for as the end of a release. Include full contact details so if there are any enquiries the journalist has a contact to get back to.

### 3. Electronic distribution

Don't send attachments as some recipients do not open files that they think may contain a virus, or may not find attachments acceptable unless they are warned beforehand.

Switch off the email editor facility if your package caters for these. You don't know what email software your recipient will be using, it is far more effective to send it by email in plain text.

Remove bold, italics, underlining and unnecessary formatting, as when it is delivered it will be received as gibberish.

Most importantly ensure that the release is aimed at your target audience and is not sent to recipients for whom it is not relevant.

Creative Leicestershire, with acknowledgement to Pressbox.co.uk

[www.creativeleicestershire.org.uk](http://www.creativeleicestershire.org.uk)

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