

What Makes a Good Press Release?

There are some key rules to follow when it comes to writing a good press release and following these will help you to write a release that editors will accept and that readers will want to read to the very last word.

Rule 1 - Hard hitting headlines

You should always use an intriguing headline. Gaining a reader's attention with an interesting headline is vital and you should try to think outside the box when it comes to writing these, as the more obscure the headline the more likely it is that the reader will want to read on and find out more.

Rule 2 - Start with six

You should aim to answer six questions within the opening paragraph. These questions are:

- Who?
- What?
- Where?
- When?
- How?
- Why?

Answering all of the above questions early on in your press release, and doing so in an exciting way will provide the reader with some background to the subject you are writing about. However you still need to leave some mystery in the content of your opening paragraph to encourage the reader to keep reading. It is important to be aware that if sending a press release out to editors of newspapers, magazines, journals etc, if they choose to use your release they will generally edit the document from the bottom up, so if there is any really important information this should be included towards the start of your release.

Rule 3 - Mind your language!

Press releases are obviously intended to promote, but using excessive selling words or unqualified superlatives will result in your press release appearing to be insincere and therefore it will fail to produce the intended results. For example, claiming that your service is 'totally unique' when in truth there are hundreds of other companies that offer the same service will make readers feel you are feeding them untruths and will discredit the rest of your release.

Rule 4 - Keep it brief

A press release should be fast flowing and to the point. Editors and readers alike will not want to read any unnecessary padding. Get to the point of your press release and then stop.

Rule 5 - Check it

The most important rule of all is to check what you have written. You will often get carried away when you are typing and when you go back to check your text you may find that you have included unnecessary, or even worse, incorrect information. Double check any times, dates etc if you are writing about a specific

event, also double check spellings, grammar and punctuation. A poorly written press release with lots of errors will stand out for all the wrong reasons!

Following these five golden rules and applying some creative and intelligent writing will have you well on your way to writing a good press release.

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