ProductNewsNetwork *Your Industrial Product News Source*

Primer

Writing a New Product or Service Press Release for the Industrial Market

Prepared by Product News Network

Writing a Press Release

Press Releases Are Important!

Press releases are an important part of the marketing/communications effort. They communicate the latest news about your company and its products to the media. Press releases on new product developments are important to journalists for a variety of reasons, the major one being that their readers are interested in the latest product developments in their industry.

Another name for a press release is a news release meaning that it is <u>new news</u>. Journalists are keenly aware of press releases on a product that has been around awhile without substantial change. You run the risk of angering journalists and having any future release seen as suspect. If you have a product that has been around but has a significant new feature, that is news and the journalists will welcome this information.

This document highlights the important steps to writing a successful press release and although there are no guarantees that every press release you write will be picked up by the press, these steps should improve your chances.

Writing a press release

The important key to writing a press release is keeping it concise and to the point. Editors receive hundreds of releases every week. A tight, well-written release will help an editor understand quickly why your news is important to their readers.

The first item on a press release that a journalist will see is the headline. It is important to write a headline that will grab the journalist's attention. The headline should sum up the entire story. It should be concise and descriptive so the journalist receives clear picture of the contents of the release, and if it is of interest to their readers, they will read the release. If the release is on a new feature, or an update to an existing product, state that information in the headline.

After the headline, the first paragraph of the release is the most important. Just as we learned in journalism 101, the first paragraph should answer the following questions:
- Who
- What
- Where
- When
- Why
- How

In some cases, it may take two paragraphs to accomplish this, but never more.

The rest of the press release supports the first paragraph. A journalist wants to be informed, not sold. It is important that you are factual and honest with your statements about the product. The document should provide supporting information to substantiate any claim made. You should <u>avoid</u> marketing "hype."   This can be put in the boilerplate at the end of the release.

It is important that you avoid unsubstantiated claims in your release. A journalist judges the credibility of a release based on the credible back-up information provided with each claim. It is also important that a release supply the answers to potential questions about your product.

Keep the writing style dynamic and to the point. It is important to engage the busy reader of the release immediately even if the release is about an "industrial staple." If you are not excited about your product, you cannot expect a journalist to be.

Your release should preferably be one page and no more than two. Realize, most stories about new products tend to be one or two paragraphs in most trade magazines. A release longer than two pages will most likely not be read to the end. Again, as stressed earlier, be concise and to the point.

Avoid the temptation to use industry terminology and jargon. Write in a conversational style using conversational English. You will find a large number of journalists do not have the same technical background as you even if they write for a trade magazine.

When describing your product remember Feature, Function & Benefit. What it is, what it does and the benefit to the user. This will help the journalist communicate to their readers why they should consider your products. It is important that you provide specific and detailed information.

The last information in a release is about your company and the important contacts as it relates to the product. The company information should describe your business and the industries you serve. You need to provide a contact name that the journalist can contact for more information. This person should be familiar with all the news in the release, and should be ready to answer questions. Include the contact phone number, fax, Email address, Web address and mail address. You can also issue your release on company letterhead to give it a professional appearance.

Lastly, have someone you trust proofread your work. Typos, spelling and grammatical errors will hurt your credibility with journalists.

Here are some questions you should answer in your press release:[1]
- Who is your preferred audience?
- What do you want readers to take away from your release about your new product?
- What does your release provide: invaluable information about a new product or just another offer?
- What is the support or justification for the information in your release?
- What is the tone of your release?
- Are you aware of possible pitfalls or areas to avoid?
- What do you want to accomplish with your release: increase business, disseminate information, or both? Does the release's lead (opening) address or answer the basic tenets of journalism:
  - who

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[1] How to Write a Press Release, Michigan State University ,
http://www.msu.edu/course/aee/211/newswritinghowto.pdf

- o what
- o when
- o where
- o why
- o how

Supporting Documentation

The following items should be included in the press release packet, whenever available:

1. Pictures & Images – all pictures and images that help the journalists and readers visualize you product.
2. Specifications Sheets / Product Brochures – Any specification sheets or promotional information.

Resources used in creating this document:

Write a Successful Press Release – American Express Small Business,
http://home3.americanexpress.com/smallbusiness/resources/expanding/pressrel/index.shtml

Packing a Punch with Press Releases – About.com,
http://advertising.about.com/library/weekly/aa090302a.htm

How to Write a Press Release, Planning Begins Before You Write – Michigan State University,
http://www.msu.edu/course/aee/211/newswritinghowto.pdf

Press Release Template

For Release (Time if important) Month, Date, Year

Headline that catches attention

Sub-headline that finishes thought of headline

City — Release Date — The paragraph that answers Who, What, Where, When Why and How. Provides concise answer to all the 5 W's and H. After the headline, this is the most important paragraph. Be specific and clearly identify the subject of the release.

The rest of the press release supports the first paragraph. This paragraph begins the factual back up to any claims made in the press release. This can contain information on the capabilities of the product or service, the potential application and industries.

It is important that you are factual and honest with your statements about the product. The document should provide supporting information to back-up any claim made so you should avoid marketing "hype."   Avoid unsubstantiated claims. Provide credible back-up information with each claim.

Keep the writing style dynamic and to the point. Your release should be a page and no more than two. Be concise and to the point.

Avoid industry terminology and jargon. Write in a conversational style using conversational English.

When describing your product remember Feature, Function & Benefit. What it is, what it does and the benefit to the user. This will help the journalist communicate to their readers why they should consider your products.

About Your Company

The last information in a release is about your company and the important contacts as it relates to the product.   The company information should describe your business and the industries you serve. You need to provide a contact name that the journalist can contact for more information. Include the contact phone number, fax, Email address, Web address and mail address. You can also issue your release on company letterhead to give it a professional appearance.

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This is for any legal jargon such as registered trade marks, patents and copy writes.

For more information, press only:

(PR Contact Name), (Phone Number), (Email Address)

For more information, for general public:

(PR Contact Name), (Phone Number), (Email Address)

For more information on your product:

http://www.yourdomain.com/productpage