

Guidance on Writing Press Releases

What should go into a press release?

To write an effective press release, answer the following questions:

- **Who?** Who are the key players - your organisation, anyone else involved with the project? Who does your news affect/who does it benefit?
- **What?** What is new?
- **Why?** Why is this important news - what does it tell people that they need to know?
- **Where?** Where is this happening?
- **When?** What is the timing of this? Does this add significance?
- **How?** How did this come about?

It is not uncommon for press releases to be written up and reported without any further follow-up with the sender - so make sure your release contains all the key detail needed. One point to bear in mind is that editors edit from the bottom of a press release up - so ensure the most important points are at the top.

Writing press releases for different audiences

The most important thing to think about when writing a press release is the target audience. The readers of a niche magazine or website will be very different to those that read the local newspaper. In fact, you should write different versions of your release for the different audiences you are targeting.

When thinking about the audience, consider what knowledge they have about your organisation and project, and the type of language they will understand.

How long should a press release be?

The answer is, as few paragraphs as you need to get your points across. Avoid waffle and lengthy explanation. Keep the copy as tight as possible.

You need to get all the key information into the first paragraph of a press release. The test of success is whether the story can be understood in its entirety just by reading the first paragraph.

The second paragraph expands on the first, giving a bit more detail. Often, the third paragraph provides a quote. The fourth paragraph outlines final information, such as other projects in development, for example.

Writing tips for press releases

- A writing style with sentences that are 25 words in length, preferably fewer, helps to make your press release punchy;
- A good press release should take a **factual** tone and be **short** and **concise**, giving the journalist the essence of the story. They will get in touch if they want

more information. If you get the news content right and write to the publication's style, you give yourself a good chance of getting your story across.

- With press releases for broadcast media, the same rules apply in terms of writing and presentation. It is not uncommon to be invited for interview and find that, particularly in live interview situations, the interviewer has only read the first paragraph of the release or scanned it in the 30 seconds before the interview.

Timing - for immediate release or embargo?

Indicate at the top of the release whether it is for immediate release or under embargo, and if so, give the relevant date. Remember that it can be frustrating for journalists to receive information under embargo that cannot be published straight away. An embargo does not mean that journalists can't contact you about your story, however - it just means that you are asking them not to publish it before a particular date.

How to structure a press release

Key ways to structure and present your press release are below.

Give the press release a title

The job of the press release title is to grab attention and encourage the journalist to read more. Don't labour over what title might look good in print - most journalists/editors will change the title to suit their readership.

How to end the press release

Signal the end of the press release with the word "Ends" in bold. After "Ends", write "For further information, please contact" and list your details or those of an appointed person. Do give a mobile number if you can, so that journalists can contact you easily. The more accessible you are, the better.

If any further information is needed, these can go in "Notes to editors" under the contact information. Examples might include background information on the organisation (called a boilerplate), or a note saying that photos are available. It's helpful to number these points, to make your press release as clean as possible.

Who should I send a press release to?

It's essential to research the press and media you will be targeting with your press release. Get hold of back copies of publications, and tune in to relevant radio and TV programmes. This will enable you to tailor your story to suit.

For any news story, there are many angles that can be used. If a business launches a new product, there might be mileage in targeting any, or all, of the following:

- local press (the area in which the company is based);
- specialist press (the company's sector);
- specialist press (read by people who will benefit from the news in the release);
- consumer press (if there is a more mainstream benefit);

- national press (if there is a significant impact or change).

When you do your research, identify working patterns and deadlines. Many weekly local papers, for example, have a Tuesday deadline for Thursday publication. So, you might be wise not to issue a time-sensitive press release to that audience on a Wednesday.

How to send a press release to journalists

Generally, you should send a press release by email. It's wise to make your subject line attention-grabbing. Any press release sent by email should be pasted into the email rather than sent as an attachment - this may see your email flagged as spam.

Journalists receive a lot of emails, so you may want to **follow up** press releases with a call to check they've seen it.

Should I supply images with my press release?

If you have photographs to use with your press release, then supply them. If you read the news during the week, you'll find that many stories appear as just a photograph with caption. It's a great way to get your message across, and can be quite striking.

Avoid head-and-shoulders shots - think more creatively. Be careful with branding, as shots that have large logos in the background can be a huge turn off. Photos that may be reproduced in black and white also need careful thought to get the tones right.

It's a good idea to include in your press release, under 'Note to editors', that photos are available on request, rather than sending them as an attachment with your press release. Clogging up inboxes won't win you any friends, and attachments may be flagged as spam.

Always include a caption with photographs. If people are included, state "Left to right..." then list the people in the shot and any further detail that's relevant (ie where, when, etc).

Credit: www.marketingdonut.co.uk

The Lane End Kids Club

28 / July / 2018

PRESS RELEASE - For Immediate release

Street Angels Star to Open Lane End Kids Club Summer Fair

Teen heart-throb Ralph Swift will open this year's Summer Fair at the Lane End Community Centre. He will arrive at the Centre on the Harley Davidson motorcycle he rides in the hit series Street Angels.

The Summer Fair which takes place on Saturday 11th August at 2pm will also mark an official opening for the Lanes End Kids Club.

Ralph Swift, who is a former Carlisle resident and attended Lane End Comprehensive School, is a long time supporter of the project. His character in Street Angels has been seen going through many of the problems with family breakdown and teenage crime that The Project seeks to address.

The club which aims to provide play and youth counselling facilities to all Carlisle children will be based in the newly refurbished Lane End Community Centre.

Newly appointed Chairman of the club Andrea Andrews stated-

" We are delighted that Ralph has agreed to open the fair for us. Ralph has always been really supportive of the project as have the many local volunteers and businesses who have given up so much time and really got behind our ideas. Our fair will be a great way to celebrate the completion of our building work at the Centre and launch of the Kids Club Project."

Ends

For further information, please contact:

Nick Martlet - Lane End Kids Club 01228 456457 email
- nick@laneend.com

Notes to editors:

1. Lane End Community Centre received a refurbishment grant of £100,000 from the County Community Fund in September 2016

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2. Lane End Kids Club will be open every week day evening from 5pm starting 1st August 2018