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How to write a press release AND get it published

By Steve Nash

How to write a press release AND get it published by Steve Nash

=> Summary

This article contains a checklist to writing a press release. And it includes the single most important ingredient of a press release, that will dramatically improve your chances of getting your news published.

=> Introduction

Firstly, let me say straight away that I am *not* an expert at writing press releases. Over the years, I have read and studied many articles on how to write a press release; I have then submitted my press release only to see them fail to get noticed by editors.

That's not to say that the articles I read were poor – all offered good advice, but not in the format I wanted: a simple checklist.

So I created my own checklist to help me write a press release. A do-able step-by-step guide to writing a press release that makes writing the news release a straight-forward process.

And I was ready to write this article nine months ago, but something was missing from my press releases at the time – a vital ingredient – and so my press releases were still not getting published.

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I am only writing this article NOW simply because my last press release WAS published, in several UK computer magazines. I am only writing this article NOW because I now know what the missing ingredient is to a successful press release (that gets published). It's simple, really, *and* obvious! (Read on!)

Note: I'm still not an expert when it comes to writing a press release – you'll find links to experts at the bottom of this article – but I am much more confident that my press releases will get published now. And you can be confident too...

=> Press Release Checklist

- o Step 1 – What's Your Story?
- o Step 2 – Think Like A Journalist
- o Step 3 – Mechanics Of Writing A Press Release
- o Step 4 – Example Layout Of A Press Release
- o Step 5 – Is Your Press Release Ready?

- o The missing ingredient – K-I-S-S

- o Appendix: Expert press release resources

So, what follows is advice distilled from many sources, organised in a way that allows you to follow the basic steps of writing a press release. (And you can always find out more detailed information, should you need it, in the Appendix!)

What also follows is the vital ingredient missing from many how-to articles, that improve your chances of getting your news published...

=> Step 1 – What's Your Story?

1.1) Find your story, and develop it!

1.2) Position yourself as being different

1.3) Develop different angles

- holiday and event tie-in articles
- tips, articles, advice
- politically and socially important editorial tie-in articles
- new, unique products, Internet innovations and developments
- human interest angles

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- interpersonal relationships on difficult issues
- unusual events, unique personal accomplishments, unusual creative ideas
- humor and wisdom, fun and tragedy

Some suitable news–sources to aid your research:

- <http://news.bbc.co.uk>
- <http://www.zdnet.com>
- <http://www.backwash.com>
- <http://www.moreover.com>

=> Step 2 – Think Like A Journalist

2.1) What reasons would an editor want to publish your news (what benefits are there for them?)

- is it relevant?
- is it mildly interesting?

– is it newsworthy?

2.2) Make the main benefit the headline

- the only purpose of your headline is to get the attention of the editor, to get him/her to read your release
- write headlines from prospects point of view (use the words YOU, NEW and/or How To in headline)

2.3) Remember the subtext

2.4) Remember K–I–S–S (keep it simple stupid!) – write for scannability; write short, punchy paragraphs

2.5) Remember to answer: "Who? Why? What? Where? When? & How?"

2.6) Write the press release so it can be put into a magazine, with just a few simple edits

=> Step 3 – Mechanics Of Writing A Press Release

3.1) The Title of your press release is vital – some say that 90% of your time should be spent on your title; make it bold & boastful (hot and shocking!)

3.2) Opening sentence continues what you are talking about in the headline

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3.3) Tell your story in headline and leading paragraph

3.4) Use specific, powerful (and true) testimonials
– use convincing case studies

3.5) Use a powerful guarantee, and draw attention to it

3.6) – No more than 5 bullet points
– No .DOC files
– No attachments
– No HTML

3.7) Change passive words to active; use the words YOU; and link selling points

3.8) For each sentence ask yourself 'So what?' – remove if there is no good answer

3.9) Edit your copy ruthlessly, over and over again!

=> Step 4 – Example Layout Of A Press Release

This is a simple example of what a press release should look like (more or less):

-- Benefit (tell me more, 36–40 chars)

-- What / why needed / how it will help
(40–75 words)

-- Include quotes

-- Who aimed at (the facts) – who cares?

-- Summarise; call to action

=> Step 5 – Is Your Press Release Ready?

1) Is your press release published on your website?

2) Better still, do you have an online press pack?

3) Do you know what to do or say if a reporter calls?

=> The missing ingredient – K–I–S–S

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Phew! A lot to take in, I agree! The main trouble with doing all of the above is that your press release will be... L-O-N-G!

Yes, the vital ingredient to your press release, the one factor that WILL increase the chances of getting your news published is to:

Keep It SHORT Stupid (yet another K-I-S-S !)

Not convinced? Ask yourself these questions, then:

* How many of these press releases do you think editors get to read every day?

* How many long, badly-worded releases will they read before eventually becoming instantly put off just by the length of a press release?

* And how much more likely do you think a press release will be read if it's a SHORT, quick read.

Keep your press release short, simple as that!

=> Appendix: Expert press release resources

If you want to know more about writing a press release then I can recommend the following resources (but do still remember to keep your press release short, eh?):

* Articles

10 Tips For Better Press Releases by B.L.Ochman
<http://www.whatsnextonline.com>

Using And Writing Press Releases by Craig Lock
<http://www.nzenterprise.com/writer/creative.html>

Publicity STARTS with a Press Release by Kate Schultz of
<http://www.ezineuniversity.com>

How to Write Press Releases that Get Published – Paul Krupin
http://www.roibot.com/pnr.cgi?R26045_press

* Links

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http://www.iboost.com/promote/press_releases/index.html
<http://www.pressreleasenet.com/>
<http://www.webpromote.com/products/prelease.asp>
<http://www.ereleases.com/>
http://www.web-source.net/web/Press_Release/
<http://drnunley.com>
<http://myws.sitesell.com/shopping101.html>

* Press release distribution

<http://www.prweb.com> – distribute your PR for free
<http://www.downesmarketing.co.uk/freepr.html>
<http://www.emailwire.com>
<http://www.sourcewire.com>

=> And finally...

So there you have it – my checklist to writing a press release.
If you need to learn more then do visit the above links. And then just make sure that you follow the checklist, and:

- * have a story to tell
- * think like a journalist
- * format the press release properly

Do keep your press release short, then keep an eye on those publications – seeing your site in print is a great feeling!

Steve Nash is editor of a twice-monthly newsletter called Promote! Promote! Promote! Subscribe by sending a blank email to topppromote@getresponse.com. To learn more about writing good copy for your press release, website, email (or anything) visit [Make Your Words Sell NOW!](http://www.makeyourwordsell.com) and learn from a net copy-writing master – <http://myws.sitesell.com/shopping101.html>

Site Promotion Tools: The Press Release

By Scott Lindsay

One of the most powerful site promotion tools is the press release. A quality press release submitted to the right news distribution portal will definitely bring important revenue if its content is of interest, qualitative and actual (yes, that's what press releases are for!).

News distribution portals and services are used by thousands of journalists all around the world. If your press release has it all, you'll probably see it published in thousands of other locations: online or offline. All in all: a good press release will attract immediate attention to your business and website. Unlike

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articles, that bring you visitors a long time after their first release, press releases have a shorter life. That's why it is so important to write them well.

A well-written online press release has another important advantage: it will increase the number of one way links to your website, thus your search engine ranking. So, although the traffic boost will not last long, you gain by having your press release archived in an online searchable database.

Write Well

Editors will not just publish anything. Your press release needs to respect a few important guidelines.

1. The layout is very important. Your first paragraph should always answer the following five questions: "who?", "what?", "when?", "where?", "why?". Limit your press release to one or two pages and always end your press release with a conclusion.
2. Always write the content from the view of the public. Highlight customer benefits, not your own. Know your audience and "think" your audience.
3. Always use proper grammar and spelling. Avoid other silly mistakes such as wrong date, misspelled names, etc.
4. Last but not least, always sign your press release and provide contact information. There is no such thing as an anonymous press release.

Your press release has to be newsworthy. What you might consider great may have little or no importance for your readers. A press release is not a sales brochure it's an announcement. It publicizes an event, a new, extraordinary product or a service. It does not repeat the contents of your website and it does not tell stories that have been told.

Submit Well

Once you have a quality press release you need a quality submission service to reach a broad audience. You need to know that you'll get what you are paying for. PR Newswire is great, reliable and has great coverage. Their fees are fair and accessible. Since this is not an article advertising PR Newswire, I'll include other options too: Eworldwire, PR Web, Submit Express and so on. Just type "press release submission" in any search engine and you'll find plenty of press release submission services, some of them even free.

You should really take care how you write your press release, especially when you pay for submission. For best results I suggest you hire a professional writer. Note that the press submission services listed above do provide press release writing services. But: don't pay for a press release writing service UNLESS your press release is newsworthy for your potential clients.

Scott Lindsay is a web developer and entrepreneur. He is the founder of HighPowerSites and many other web projects. HighPowerSites is the easiest do-it-yourself website builder on the web. No

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programming or design skill required. Get your own website online in just 5 minutes with

at:



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