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NEWS OR SNOOZE: Will Your Press Release be a Doosie or a Dud?

By Meredith Pond

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A press release can be an effective weapon in the fight for media and public attention. In fact, many businesspeople don't even think twice before writing or ordering a press release, correctly assuming that a release can provide the necessary publicity to boost sales.

As much as a well-written press release can do for your image, you need to be sure that your business or product is appropriate for a release. Believe it or not, a press release that isn't truly newsworthy can easily end up sounding like a sales pitch, which can do irreparable damage to your company's image.

A press release should make an announcement about a new product or service, an event, or a change in the way a product or service is marketed. If your company has changed management, released or upgraded a product, or is staging an important event, you have material for a solid release.

Also, any little-known business or service can make a good release if it serves the needs of the public in an interesting way. For example, I just wrote a release for a gentleman who provides a service that allows homeowners to pay off their mortgages years sooner, without making larger payments or refinancing their current loans. With mortgage rates falling and the real estate market picking up, that kind of material made a very good release.

So, a story that surrounds current events and peaks public interest usually makes good release material. Now, let's talk

about what doesn't.

If your business is, for example, an MLM that hundreds of other people are taking part in and marketing on their own, chances are that the media has already heard about it and won't pick up your story. I'm not saying that MLMs are automatic losers in the media department, because a brand-new or extremely unique program may still be newsworthy. In most cases, however, people trying to market an MLM should rely mainly on classified ads or informative articles that dance around their business, then reveal the contact information at the end.

Similarly, if you belong to an affiliate program along with lots of other people who are using their own marketing techniques, a press release probably isn't the way to go. Media people are extremely busy, and easily get overrun with press releases. Again, in this situation a classified ad or well-written article is probably a better use of your time and money.

A clever writer can take almost any subject and turn it into a press release without sounding like a sales letter. As great a talent as that is, however, media professionals will easily see through it. An effective press release doesn't just SOUND newsworthy, it IS newsworthy. A sales letter in disguise does not make a good release.

Above all, keep in mind that the last thing an editor wants to read is a sales pitch; sending them this kind of material will only get you blackballed in the media. If you're not sure your material is appropriate for a press release, ask an expert. Before ordering your release from an outside source, for example, call them or send them an email, tell them about your business, and ask them if they think a release is the right tool for you. If it's not, chances are they can recommend something that will serve you better.

Meredith Pond is editor and manager of DrNunley's <http://CheapWriting.com>. She has written hundreds of successful press releases. See her complete publicity and copy writing packages for students, businesses, and entrepreneurs. Reach Meredith at meredith@drnunley.com or 801-328-9006.

Press Release: Marketing Good News

By Scott Lindsay

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Once upon a time a press release was sent to the nearest newspaper in the hopes that at least some of the release might make it to newsprint. Today a press release to a local newspaper may be included only as an afterthought.

In marketing your website the use of a press release can be an effective means of drawing people to your website.

Certainly there are skills involved in writing a press release and there are plenty of qualified freelance writers who can assist you in the development of a solid press release. However, as with any new process it is possible to learn the skill of press release writing.

In today's online community the press release is about more than trying to pass muster with the news media. Today press releases are routinely found on individual websites and can be picked up by affiliated websites. In essence when a press release is written it needs to appeal to the news media, but it also needs to connect with the public.

Many online businesses will place a 'press release' section on their website as a means of keeping visitors informed of new developments within the company or the website.

A press release can be developed for a significant number of events. For instance, if you provide a new website design you could send out a press release talking about the new design and the reasons this design is more functional and useful to your customers. If you launch a new service, a press release can be an easy way to encourage the curious to come take a look. If you have added a new line to your existing offerings, a press release can alert your customers and potential clients to the good news. If you've won an industry award a press release can work to instill a greater degree of trust in your firm.

There are several online companies that handle the distribution of press release information. Perhaps one of the most well known is PR Newswire, but there are other services available. Many of these services require a fee for distribution.

Many online netpreneurs have learned that the effective distribution of strategic press releases can provide a sizeable return on investment in the form of new clients and unique visitors.

When you have good news you shouldn't hesitate to share it in the form of a press release. This is just one more online marketing tool worth exploring.

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. Get your own website online in just 5 minutes with

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