

STANDING OUT FROM THE CROWD

10 Steps for Building a News Release that Gets Noticed





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It's estimated that about 2,000 news releases are sent out everyday. Think about that for a minute. In fact, think about that for every minute of a 24-hour period and that still won't equal the number of news releases that have been sent out. So, needless to say, it's a crowded field out there—and you want your news release to get noticed. Otherwise, what's the point?

There are a few critical elements to keep in mind when you're working on a news release. First and foremost, remember that journalists are busy and, like the rest of us, inundated with a lot of information. Your job is to make their job easier—by providing them with real information they can actually use. Here's how you do that:

1. Find a Newsworthy Angle

Every news release should have a clear, timely and newsworthy angle. Frequent news angles include timely information about a recent event or expansion, a new product or service, an anniversary or award, the issuance of a tip sheet, or an expert opinion on a recent news issue. The key word here is timely. If it happened a week ago, it's no longer news; it's history.

2. Make the Beginning Count

Most journalists glance at the headline, subject line and first sentence of a release and base whether or not they're interested on that glance. This means those three elements have to be creative and informative. Many companies spend inordinate amounts of energy creating a great release, but don't give these elements the attention they deserve. You should put at least the same amount of work into the headline, subject line and first sentence as you put into the rest of the release—if not more. It will determine whether the journalist keeps reading.



3. Identify a Clear News Source

Make sure you identify a clear news source in the headline. The news source is the company or organization issuing the release. Make sure it is clear how that company or organization relates to the news announcement.

4. Give a Concise Summary

Follow the headline with a clear, concise summary that covers what's happening and who's involved in one to two sentences. Make sure to follow up with more details about why the event or milestone is taking place and its significance.

5. Don't Be Too Long—or Too Short

The standard length of a news release is between 300 and 800 words. The length of your release directly affects its distribution, and releases that are less than 300 words or longer than 800 words may have trouble being indexed in search engines.

6. Include Links

Adding links in your news release is beneficial for readers to find more information, but don't overdo it. Stick to one link per every 100 words.

7. Use a Quote

Include a strong quote from a company representative to support your newsworthy story. One of the quickest ways to grab a reporter's attention is by having a visible and powerful quote.

8. Paint a Picture

Tell your story with visuals. Add multimedia components to your release to double your visibility and increase coverage. Adding images and video to your news release will boost engagement and social media sharing, which will distinguish your story from other releases.



9. Include a Boilerplate

Include a boilerplate at the end of the release that details information about the company issuing the release or all parties involved in a joint release. A boilerplate concisely describes your company and product offerings to a reader who may have no prior knowledge of them.

10. Don't Forget a Media Contact

Include a valid phone number and email address in a contact information section so journalists know how to reach you. However, don't include this information in the body of the news release.

With all of these steps, remember to be creative, but informative, and use simple language so anyone can understand your release. Also, stay away from advertising hype, direct address and spam in your release. You don't like to get spammed, right? Neither do journalists.

Standing out from the crowd is tough, but it's possible. Following these steps can help get your release noticed and get your organization press coverage, which is, of course, the main goal. Keep your writing clear, your information accessible, and your message worthwhile. Journalists will thank you.