

WRITING A PRESS RELEASE

Publicity is increasingly vital to the success of businesses today, and the press (or news) release is one of the most widely used vehicles for publicity. Press releases are written to shape public perceptions of an organization through the “news” that is distributed about that organization by that organization. Although press releases should be honest and factual, most are shaped to reflect a positive image.

Examples include:

- Announcing new developments, products lines or services, or changes in leadership
- Explaining “the other side” of negative events (damage control)

Journalists receive so many press releases a day that they have standards and expectations that must be met before the release will be read and published, so releases conform to an established format. Also, most editors tend to print or broadcast the news releases that are better written and that appear to offer broadly relevant information to the public.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact Information:

Mr. John Doe

1 Anywhere Street

Anytown, USA 12345

Phone: (413) 555-1234

Email: pr@company.com

TITLE THE PRESS RELEASE AS IF IT WERE THE HEADLINE OF A NEWS STORY

Use an effective subtitle that grabs attention, develops the headline information more, and makes readers want to read further

AMHERST, MA, January, 1, 2018—Use 30 words or fewer in the opening paragraph (known as the “lede”). Make sure the first ten words are effective, as they are the most important. The lede should offer the basic information on the subject.

- MORE -



Use the WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY approach:

For example: *Acmetown, MA—The Acme Company will hold its annual potluck dinner for employees and families on August 31, 2017, at the Acmetown Meeting Hall, 1000 Main Street. “It will be spectacular,” said Acme President Albert Acme.*

Write easy and interesting to read body content:

Use vivid, descriptive language and clean, crisp sentences; write in an “inverted pyramid” style with most important idea at the top of the first body paragraph.

Make the press release read like a news story:

Is it CURRENT, CLEVER and IMPORTANT? Tell the “how” or “why” in greater detail. Show, don’t tell. Use active verbs and voice—NO PASSIVE VOICE. Use quotations. Include information that convinces the reader that the subject is newsworthy.

Consider the writing:

Style, persuasion and accuracy of information are crucial. Create pictures in the readers’ heads rather than talking in abstract. Provide valuable and complete information that hooks the readers and compels them to action: to attend the event, write about the release’s subject, or simply to get more information.

Follow press release format:

- Type the release on letter-size paper. Use pre-printed letterhead or a blank sheet of paper.
- Ideally, releases are two pages double-spaced or one page single-spaced.
- At the top left, type **For Immediate Release**.
- List the following contact information: name, address, phone and fax numbers of the distributing organization; name and direct phone number of the person to be contacted in case the reader (journalist/editor) has questions about the content.
- Begin the lede paragraph with the city and state where the release originates, followed by the date of the release.
- Before the second page, write **-MORE-** at the bottom of the first page.
- End the release with a brief paragraph that offers additional, basic information not included in the body content, such as a history, biography or company mission, to round out the readers’ understanding of the subject.
- After the end of the story, add **-30-** or **### or -END-** to conclude the release.

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ABOUT THE BUSINESS COMMUNICATION CENTER:

The BCC provides one-on-one and small group coaching to undergraduate and graduate students, supports the instruction of communication content in other courses, and offers Isenberg faculty and staff expert communications-related resources and assistance. The BCC works with other Isenberg faculty, the Chase Career Center, and student groups to customize our services and meet the needs of the Isenberg community.