

Tips for Writing a Good Press Release

A press release, or *news release*, is a fundamental tool of public relations work. It is a written statement (or pseudo-news story), written in third person and distributed to the media to demonstrate to editors or reporters the newsworthiness of a particular person, event, service or product. Press releases can announce a range of news items: scheduled events, personnel promotions, awards, news products and services, sales accomplishments, etc. They are usually faxed and/or emailed to news editors or reporters.

Tips for writing a good press release:

1. Print the release on organizational letterhead or at least include the group logo. Include the full organizational contact information: name, web address, location address, email, and phone number clearly at the top of the page.
2. Spell out 'PRESS RELEASE' in CAPS and centered in bold under the organizational masthead.
3. Now list along the left side "FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:", then under this, the date of the release. On the right side, corresponding with the date information, list "FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:", then underneath list the contact person (the person the media should contact should they need additional information). Next to this or underneath, list the contact number at which this person can be reached (optimally cell and work).
4. Now, create your title. This should be short and snappy, written to not only grab the attention of the newsroom, but also as the possible headline in the newspaper. Center and bold it. The heading of the press release should capture the journalist. Include a subtitle if needed.
5. For the release body, begin by listing the city and state from which you are sending the release in parentheses, followed by these symbols: // - . It should look something like this:
(Champaign, Illinois) // -

6. Following the dash, begin your opening paragraph. In the opening lines, cover the WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY, AND HOW (if applicable). This should be a brief overview of what the release is about.
7. For the next paragraph, a quote is often popular to draw the reader into the story. This should be from the release sender or another person related to the content of the release. The quote should relate to the release and help convey facts, stories, or other information that would otherwise be contained in the body. This is an alternative method of delivering such information and gives the release a personal touch.
8. The text in the main body of the release should be useful, accurate, and interesting. This third paragraph explains, in detail: who cares; why anyone should care; where one can find it; when it will happen.
9. Insert another quote from another key player if necessary.
10. The final paragraph should summarize the release and provide further information on your group with contact information clearly spelled out.
11. At the end of your release, place these symbols: ###. Center them directly underneath the last line to indicate the end of the release.

Additional Tips:

- ↻ Use a clear, basic font (i.e., Times New Roman).
- ↻ Double-space your release.
- ↻ If the release exceeds one page, Page 1 should indicate “more” centered at the bottom and the second page should indicate ' Page Two' in the upper right corner.