

HOW TO

WRITE A PRESS RELEASE IN FOUR EASY STEPS

PRESS RELEASES REMAIN AN ESSENTIAL TOOL OF THE TRADE FOR PRS AND COMMUNICATORS ALIKE.

The media landscape may have changed dramatically in recent years. But the fundamentals of media relations remain the same, whether you're launching a product, handling a crisis or contributing to a topical public debate. And, while it may be evolving, the press release remains a staple of media relations and PR.

It's also what journalists want to receive. [Cision's 2019 State of the Media Report](#) found that **73%** of those surveyed wanted to receive press releases from brands and comms professionals, ranking well ahead of other content types.

TO MAKE SURE YOU'RE PRODUCING THE BEST PRESS RELEASES POSSIBLE, WE'VE CREATED A GUIDE WHICH WILL HELP YOU TO CREATE GREAT PRESS RELEASES IN FOUR EASY STEPS.

1 >> IDENTIFY THE NEWS HOOK

If you want to get the attention of the press, you need to think like a journalist. That means that the first job when writing a press release is to identify the "news hook".

This will be the most newsworthy element of the story and will form the headline and lead of the piece. (As a general rule of thumb, you should be able to sum it up in 27 words or less.)

Ideally, you'll be able to include this hook as the subject line to catch a journalist's eye, and it'll also make a good "elevator pitch" if you're calling a reporter, where you'll need to pique their interest immediately.

Remember, different titles cater for different audiences, meaning the best hook may differ depending on who you are pitching to. For example, a consumer publication may be interested in a different aspect of a story to a trade publication.

In many ways, this is the hardest part of the process. It requires familiarity with your target audience and a strong grasp of what makes a story newsworthy. The best stories have a human angle which resonates with the audience, so ensure that your hook features some humanity.

2 >> DECIDE WHICH INFORMATION TO INCLUDE

Journalists barely have enough time to breathe given the number of stories they are expected to produce daily, so they do not have time to read through heaps of superfluous information.

When thinking about what information to include in your press release, remember these six questions to help you deliver the key information to a journalist and their readers:

- Who are the important people in your story?
- What are the key facts the reader should know?
- Where did this news happen, or will it take place?
- When did this news happen, or will it take place?
- Why is this something the reader should care about?
- How did this story come about?

Strong opinions make for great quotes – and if there’s public interest in the person speaking, a great, justifiable, quote can form the basis for a story all by itself.

Journalists like having a selection of sources, especially for longer pieces. Try to include two or three different quotes for them to choose from.

3 >> PUT THE MOST NEWSWORTHY FACTS FIRST

When writing your press release, start with the headline. From there, list the information in order of newsworthiness, with the most important facts first. Be sure to weave your brand’s messaging in with the story – ideally in such a way that it’s not easily deleted.

It’s generally best to put all your quotes at the end of the release, as different titles will have different conventions about how they use quotes in their pieces.

Finally, make it as easy as possible for the journalist to answer any questions they might have about your story. Include a “boilerplate” at the end, providing background information about your brand, along with your contact details so the journalist can get in touch directly.

To achieve maximum coverage, you should also have at least one high resolution picture ready to go with your story. This will ideally be embedded or attached to the release, as a journalist will not want to spend time and effort chasing images.

4 >> USE CISION’S FREE PRESS RELEASE CHECKING TOOL

Cision helps communicators do their job better and improve the relationship between PRs and journalists. To give you a taste of the power of the services we provide, we’ve launched a free tool to analyse your draft press releases and suggest ways you can optimise your release to maximise coverage.

The [Cision press release](#) checker tracks aspects which determine whether your release will engage journalists, such as the length of the heading, quality of the copy, use of quotes and whether you have included images.

Using our free tool will help you to hone your press releases and get the coverage which your story deserves. To rate your press release, simply launch the tool by clicking the button below.

[LAUNCH THE TOOL](#)