# Introduction to Press Releases

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# Introduction to Press Releases

The press release is one of the most powerful promotional tools there is. With smart distribution, a press release could get your business lots of publicity.

A press release is simply a newsworthy story about you or your business. Reporters might want to print your press release or they may be interested in interviewing to assist in a story they are working on.

## Why Do Press Releases Still Work?

Press releases have been around since the early 1900s. With newspaper readership on the decline, you might think that the press release's heyday has come and gone. But in reality, the increased speed at which information travels online has made press releases more useful than ever.

Editors of offline publications are busy people. They spend a great deal of time searching for news stories and assigning journalists to write them. Press releases can save them time by alerting them to potential news stories. And if they are written properly, they can be published as-is. This is especially helpful if they have page space to fill on a tight deadline.

Those who edit online publications also have tight schedules. If they receive a good press release via email, they can simply cut and paste for an instant story. Even if they decide to add to it, most of the work is already done for them.

Many bloggers like press releases, too. Mainstream bloggers use press releases in the same way as media professionals. Personal and part-time bloggers often use them when they're short on time but still want to give their readers content on a regular basis.
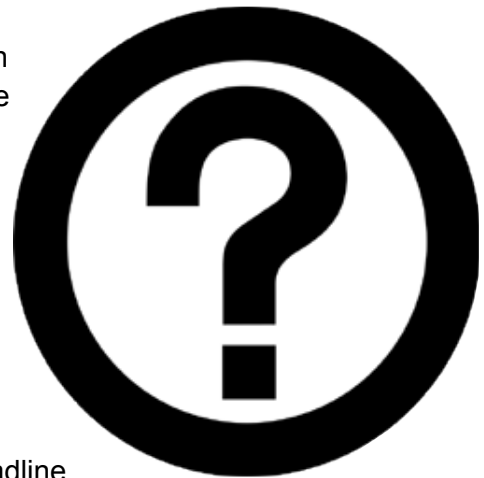
**Formatting Your Press Release**

A press release is simply a document written in the form of a news story and sent to members of the press. Anyone can write a press release, but it's important to use the proper format. A press release should include the following:

- **Source information** – Your business name and contact information should appear at the top of the release if it is sent via mail or fax. Press releases distributed online should include this information at the bottom of the page.

- **Release instructions** – In most cases, you'll want to let the reader know that the release is ready to go live immediately. If so, use "For Immediate Release". If your release is time-sensitive, you can use "For Release Before (date)" or "For Release After (date)".

- **Headline** – Like any news story, a press release needs an attention-grabbing headline. The headline should be between 100 and 150 characters long. Some writers also include a subhead under the headline. This is optional, but it provides an additional opportunity to draw the reader in. It should be short and to the point, but can be slightly longer than the headline.

- **Dateline** – The dateline consists of the originating city and the date of the release.

- **Introduction** – The introductory paragraph is the most important part of the body of the press release. As with any well-written news story, it should include the "Five Ws" of journalism: who, what, where, when and why. This paragraph should provide all of the key points of the release.

- **Body** – The remainder of the body should include details supporting the main idea. Use statistics and quotations where appropriate. You can quote customers, business partners, industry experts or even yourself.

- **Company information** – The last paragraph can provide a brief background of you and/or your business.

- **Close** – The conclusion of the release should be marked by the "###" symbol. If you need to add any notes that you do not want published, they should appear below the close.

The ideal length of a press release is 500 to 800 words. For best results, try to keep the entire release no more than one page long. Always write press releases in the third person, and take care to use proper grammar and correct spelling.

## Where to Distribute Your Press Release

Before the internet, press releases were distributed by wire, postal mail or fax. They may also be sent by these methods today, but the vast majority are distributed online. Here are some of the best places to distribute your press releases.

- **PRWeb.com** – One of the internet's leading press release services, PR Web submits releases to a huge network of journalists and bloggers. They also submit releases directly to major search engines and news sites. PR Web charges a reasonable fee for each release depending on the features desired, and subscription plans are available.

- **PRLog.com** – PR Log does not offer as many features as PR Web, but it is free to post your release on the site. All submissions are optimized for search engines, and premium distribution packages are available for a fee.

- **News outlets in your niche** – If you can't afford a paid submission service, it's a good idea to submit your press release directly to some publications that are relevant to your niche. A quick Google search should bring up some options if you don't have any in mind. Visit their websites to find out if they accept unsolicited submissions and where you should send them. If you can't find that information, email the editor to request it.

- **Local news outlets** – Even if your target market is not local, your local news outlets may be interested in news about your local business. If they publish your release online, it could help bring traffic to your site.


- **Your website** – It's always a good idea to add your press releases to your own site. That way any members of the media that visit can easily access them. At the very least, they could help you get more search engine traffic.

Press releases are just as important today as they were when print publications were the primary sources of news. A good press release can go a long way in promoting your business.


# Press Release Example Template

<INSERT COMPANY LOGO>


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact Person's Full Name
Company Name
Mailing Address
Phone Number
Email Address
Precise Website Address / URL for More Information

## Attention Getting Headline Here – Include a Benefit for the Reader


***City, Town, Date*** – *Summary that draws the reader in to learn more. Make sure you address who, what, where, when, why and when. Be succinct, but include enough information.*

Provide some relevant background information about your product/event/announcement. Make sure you include information on why this is important to the target audience. Be factual and succinct.

Add a quotation from a customer or somebody who reinforces your expertise or the importance of your announcement. Include that person's full name and if relevant, include their credentials.

Include a quotation from yourself that says why you created the products/put together the event, etc. Having a quotation from yourself makes it easier for you to assert an opinion, while still remaining newsworthy. Make sure to include your full name and position in the company.

Finish your press release with a company summary and what you do. Include a statement that says, "For more information, please contact…" and include a phone number and email. Also include the URL of where to get more information on the website.

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