

# **PRESS RELEASE**

## **+ What is a press release?**

It's important to know that while organisations use press releases to promote their goods and services, they're not adverts. In fact, journalists are quick to spot organisations who dress something up as news in order to get free advertising.

Press releases are short, factual news stories written in the third person and given to the media to encourage editors/journalists/broadcasters to feature the story in their publications and programmes.

They can also be published on the originator's website and in company magazines and newsletters. In these instances, the style is often changed from the third to the first person.

## **+ What a Press Release Is Not**

A press release is not a guaranteed marketing tool. Temper your expectations. Don't anticipate every press release you write will always be picked up and passed along by mainstream media sources.

But don't give up. Keep trying. Successful publicity depends on sustained effort.

## ✚ When to Send a Press Release?

Any time you have something newsworthy to share.

This includes:

- **Breaking news announcements:** News outlets want to be first to cover news when it breaks. So, lend them a helping hand.
- **Product launches:** New products often make for good news pieces.
- **Events:** These can offer reporters something timely and interesting to share with their audiences.
- **Partnerships:** If you team up with another interesting company, the news may want to know.
- **Sharing research:** Unique data and original insights are always interesting.
- **Awards:** Don't be afraid to talk yourself up (a little bit).
- **Hiring new executives:** At larger organizations, this can be considered important news.
- **Crisis management:** When something bad happens, it's best to get in front of it (before someone else does).

Make sure you have something your audience (and the media's audience) will care about. This will dramatically increase the odds that your release will earn coverage.

## ✚ The Nine Components of a Press Release

### 1. Letterhead/Logo

It's a good idea to place your organization's logo or letterhead at the top of your press release. This makes it easy for press staff to identify where the press release is coming from and it lends credibility to your news. Press release format is something you should consider when developing your brand standards. You will need to decide where and how big your logo should be placed, what size and type of font to use, margin widths, and line spacing to avoid variation in the way your press releases look.

### 2. Contact Information

Once the press staff read your release, they may want to reach out to you or your organization for further information. Include contact information of the person on your team who can most effectively field media calls and emails.

### 3. “For Immediate Release”

Most of the time, you’ll want your news to go public as soon as possible. In this case, you should include “For immediate release” toward the top of your document. This indicates to the press that there is no holding period for publication. If you decide to embargo, or request a stay of publication until a specific date, you must also indicate that as well.

### 4. Headline and sub-headline

A headline is the opportunity to grab the reader’s attention. It should summarize what your news is about and encourage the reader keep reading. The sub-headline should describe the headline in more detail. Both are typically written in the subject-verb-object format and should be around 70 characters at most. For example:

Headline: **County Health Department Launches Childhood Obesity Program**

Subhead: *Community grant keeps kids on playgrounds, off couches*

### 5. Dateline

The dateline includes the date as well as the city and state (see AP Style guide) where the press release is being issued, and it precedes the first paragraph of the release.

### 6. Body

The body is where the news story is written. The first paragraph should succinctly summarize the entire story, clearly articulating who, what, when, where, why, and how the story happened (or will happen). Subsequent paragraphs describe those same elements in further detail. Though there are ways to frame these details to provide a certain angle to the story, it is important to write facts only. The body is not a place for inserting opinions on an issue—this portion should be easy for media to publish directly.

## 7. Quote

Press releases should be fact-driven, but you will often want to include some formal opinion about the issues from your organization. A quote from an organizational representative (usually a director or lead on a project) is a good way to achieve this editorial edge. You may also consider including a quote from a third party who can add credibility to your story. This may be a content expert, a community leader, or a constituent affected by your story. Make sure your titles are formatted properly, and don't let quotes overshadow the facts—instead use them to highlight and support the narrative you've written.

## 8. Boilerplate

The boilerplate is a few sentences at the end of your press release that describes your organization. This should be used consistently on press materials and written strategically, to properly reflect your organization.

## 9. ###

This indicates the end of the press release so that the journalist or editor doesn't miss any information. If your release is longer than one page, insert "--more--" at the bottom of each page preceding the last.

# **Basic Press Release Writing Tips and Best Practices**

Now that you've got a solid template to follow here are five tips to help you create a valid press release.

## 1. Think Like A Journalist

If you're writing a press release to send to a journalist you need to think (and write) like a journalist. You need to be able to pitch a story that captures the attention of the journalist you're pitching to. Some tips to keep in mind:

- **Make the information they need easy to find.** Don't bury the lead for your reader. Tell them upfront what the purpose of your press release is.
- **Keep your press release short and sweet.** Your journalist is busy, don't waste their time with fluff.

- **Don't overdo it.** Everyone's organization has the best event, the best new product the best whatever it happens to be. Just don't start your press releases with that kind of clichés.

## 2. Make Sure Your Story Has Value to a Publication's Audience

If you're a software company sending a press release to a publication that writes about pick-up trucks, why would they run a story about your organization?

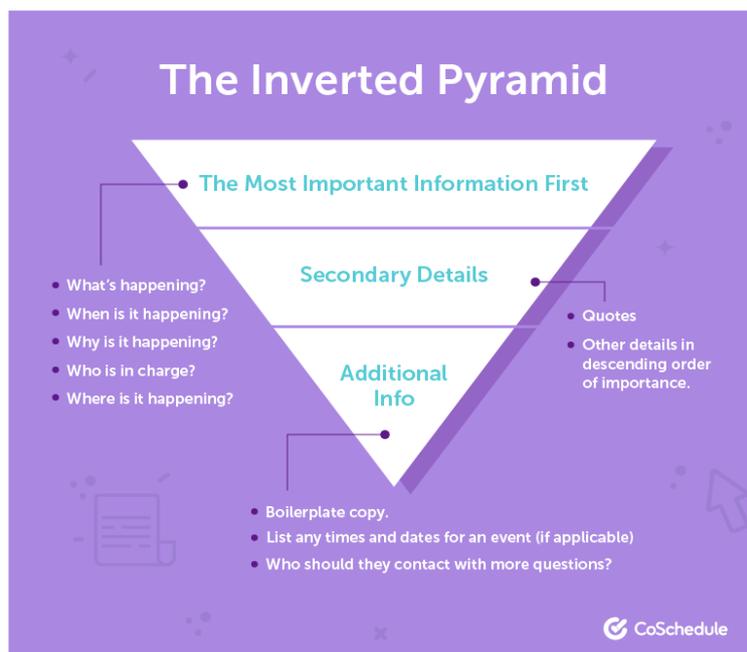
When determining where to pitch your story, ensure that:

- **Their readership or viewership aligns with your target audience.** Do both your audiences care about the same things?
- **Their coverage area aligns with your product or service.** Will the publication care about your company?

You can do this by reading a few issues of a physical publication, or by spending some time on their website.

## 3. Follow the Inverted Pyramid

This format entails putting your most important information first. Follow this visual guide:



## 4. Include Useful Quotes

One of the most critical parts of your press release is including a quote that writers will be able to pull and use in their own story. Remember, reporters, and writers, are already super busy. The more work that you create for them, the less chance they will have of covering your story. Here's a basic example from Bobcat Company:

**Doosan Bobcat North America partners with middle and high schools for National Engineering Week**



Doosan Bobcat North America – through its Bobcat® compact equipment and Doosan® portable power equipment brands – partnered with middle and high schools in North Carolina, North Dakota and Minnesota as part of National Engineering Week. The week is dedicated to increasing students' understanding of and interest in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) careers.

While National Engineering Week occurs during the last week in February, Doosan Bobcat organized events throughout the months of February and March in and around Bismarck, Gwinner, Fargo and Wahpeton, North Dakota; Statesville, North Carolina; and Litchfield, Minnesota. Each location offered students hands-on engineering activities, including understanding robotics, building a remote-control obstacle course, and learning about heat transfer and electrical circuit boards.

"Promoting interest in STEM-related programs is a mission we take very seriously at Doosan Bobcat," said Laura Ness Owens, vice president of marketing for Doosan Bobcat North America. "We want to do everything we can to help ensure there are more young people reaching their full potential and believe STEM students are our future innovators, who can help move our communities and businesses forward."

The quote at the end is clear, and can easily be copied and pasted into a reporter's news coverage.

## 5. Eliminate Fluff

Press releases should always be short and to the point. Reporters and editors are busy people.

## 6. Write in the third person

As you are not writing to your target audience directly, you need to write your press release in the third person. So "ABC Ltd has signed a £5 million deal with XYZ Ltd" not "We've signed a deal with..."

Also, you are not writing the story that might appear in the paper. You are writing it from your client's/organisation's point of view.

For example, if you were writing a press release from Tesco apologising to residents for the upheaval caused by the building of a new store, you

wouldn't write "Residents are up in arms over Tesco building works" – that's what the paper might print. You write "Tesco is taking residents' concerns seriously and holding a public meeting on..."

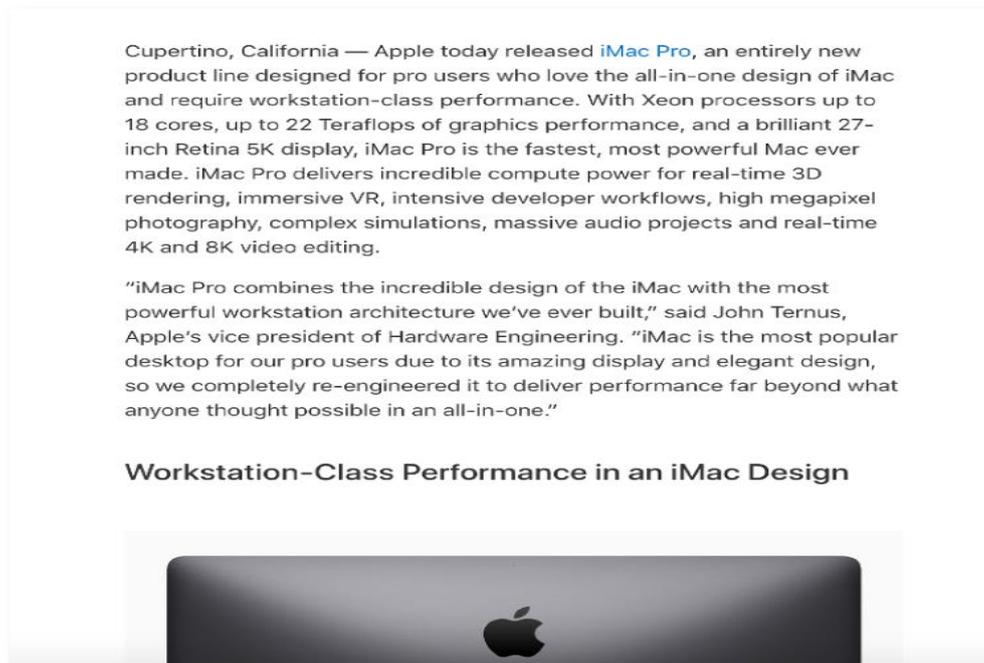
## **Review Your Work with This Checklist**

Before sending your release, double-check that it's error-free:

- Is the release date correct?
  - For immediate release in the top corner?
  - Is the publish date correct?
- Is the contact information in the right-hand corner?
  - Name
  - Phone number
  - Email
- Is the location of the organization in the correct all caps format?
- Is all the relevant information in the top paragraph of the press release?
- Is the boiler plate at the bottom of the template?
- Are the pound signs in the correct places?
- Is the spacing formatted correctly?
  - Two lines between each paragraph?
- Is the press release error-free?
  - Spelling
  - Grammar
  - Any incomplete sentences?
- What time is the press release being published?
- Are the contacts in our media list up to date?

## ✚ *Examples of Press Releases (And Why They Work)*

### Apple Product Launch Press Release:



### Why This Works:

- Apple goes in depth describing the new model of the iMac.
- They highlight the different features of the product and point out the improvements.
- They include images that highlight the new design of their product.

## News Release Example From CNN

November 30th, 2017

### CNN Investigates Climate Change in Arctic and U.S.

*Two-part series airs on AC360° tonight and December 1, half-hour special airs December 2 at 2:30pm ET*

As the 2017 hurricane season comes to an end, CNN's senior international correspondent **Clarissa Ward** takes viewers to Greenland to see firsthand the changes taking place in the Arctic, and how those changes are impacting coastal cities in the United States. This two-part investigation airs tonight and Friday, December 1 within AC360° (8-10pm ET) on CNN and CNN International, and in a half-hour special, **Global Warning: Arctic Melt**, on Saturday, December 2 at 2:30pm ET on CNN.

In Greenland, Ward gets a close-up view of Helheim Glacier, one of the country's fastest-moving glaciers. Between August 2016 and August 2017, scientists say Helheim retreated two miles, the furthest retreat inland they have seen in a decade.

Jason Box, an American climate scientist and professor in glaciology at the Geological Survey of Denmark and Greenland, tells Ward the "melt is winning this game."

"Greenland is at the epicenter of climate change," says Box. "Everything is kind of stacking up that the ice is going faster than forecast. The melt is winning this game."

Ward also gains rare access to Summit Station, a remote American outpost located at the summit of the Greenland Ice Sheet, to see how scientists and engineers are tracking these climate changes. As temperatures rise and the melt increases, Greenland has become the largest source of sea level rise globally.

From Greenland Ward travels to Miami, Florida and Norfolk, Virginia – two cities that have both seen dramatic increases in sea level rise in the last century – to find out how melting in the Arctic is impacting U.S. coastlines.

### Why This Works:

- The title explains what's happening.
- It explains the when the event will begin and end as well as what is supposed to happen throughout the night.
- It's short and concise.

## New Hire Press Release from EverBlue Training

Created: Wed, 2011-03-30 12:05

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

#### EVERBLUE ENERGY HIRES ERIN MURPHY AS LEED INSTRUCTOR AND CURRICULUM DEVELOPER

Everblue Energy Inc. is pleased to announce its recent hire of Erin Murphy, who will join the Everblue team as a LEED Instructor and Curriculum Developer working remotely from Durango, CO. Within these roles, Murphy will teach classes about the LEED rating system, as well as work on the development of curriculums for Everblue's future training programs.

"I was attracted by the company's mission to build earth's sustainable workforce and the commitment that Jon and Chris have to decreasing our country's dependence on foreign oil," Murphy said. "I believe that teaching people how to apply sustainability principles to buildings, their lives, and even their companies is the best multiplier to truly create change."

Murphy comes to Everblue with five years of experience in the environmental and green building field. Most recently, Murphy worked as a government contractor for Sandia National Laboratories (SNL), in the Environmental Planning Department. There, she led community outreach efforts, including presentations, training seminars, event planning and creating marketing materials. This background has helped Murphy to make an easy transition into her current position with Everblue.

"I intend to apply my green building project experience and communication skills to teaching and developing curriculum that will help Everblue's students get jobs, change the economy and improve the environment," she said.

In addition to her prior outreach and teaching experience, Murphy has extensive experience with LEED training in particular. Before working for SNL, Murphy served as a LEED project facilitator for Halcom Consulting. While working as a project facilitator, she had hands-on experience with the LEED-new construction certification process.

Murphy combines her recent experience in contracting and consulting with past experience in a number of other areas, specifically public relations, legislative tracking, and as a board member for the New Mexico Chapter of the US Green Building Council. Murphy has been a LEED Accredited Professional since March 2007, and she earned EB O+M Specialty in August 2010.

For more information, please contact Lesley Cowie at 800-460-2575, email [info@everbluetraining.com](mailto:info@everbluetraining.com) or visit the Everblue website at [www.everbluetraining.com](http://www.everbluetraining.com).

### **Why This Works:**

- The name and title of the new hire are in the headline.
- It contains a quote from the new hire.
- It explains the new duties and jobs that the new hire will take on.

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