

HOW TO WRITE A PRESS RELEASE THAT GETS NOTICED



Anyone can write a press release. It's the easiest thing in the world; headline, intro, body, soundbite, contact details and – boom – it's in the bag. Wasn't that simple? Perhaps, but that's not the question you should be asking yourself. You should be asking whether that press release you just churned out was any good. In this blog post, I'm going to show you how to write a press release that gets noticed – and I've also attached a press release template that you can download for free.

A good press release is like a good CV: the best written ones will be picked up, read from end to end and acted upon. The remaining 99% will go straight in the bin. If you're going to the bother of writing a press release you'd better make it a good one. Otherwise you're only wasting your time and that of every news agency you submit it to.

But what constitutes a good press release? What is it that separates the 1% from the 99%? And what can you do to ensure that your press releases are consistently picked up? These are all excellent questions, each of which I'll address in turn in turn. But first, let's take a second to consider why you might want to write a press release in the first place.

THE CASE FOR A RELEASE



The shortest answer to why you should write a press release is because it's free publicity. Online magazines and news websites especially are looking for content that can be published quickly and you're looking to spread the word about your latest antics or product launch. A press release fills a need for the subject and the news agency alike. The more sites you can get writing about your brand, the better your visibility and, if they're linking in, the better your search engine ranking. Press releases might not be the most glamorous means of drumming up publicity but they're certainly effective.

So why do many journalists open press releases (that's if they open them at all) through gritted teeth, often while face-palming and with the cursor hovering over the trash icon?

Because most press releases suck. The subject line is weak and unenticing. The first sentence is breathless, punctuation-less and giddy with its own self-importance. The quotation is bland, clichéd and could have been written by a soundbite-generating bot. Bad press releases are like

bad drivers or bad singers: they're everywhere, and more often than not the individuals are blissfully unaware of their own awfulness.

But we've spent enough time bemoaning the worst of the worst. Let's go through the makings of what makes a great press release line by line and really break it down. Then, when we're done, you can download the press release template that's contained at the end of this guide. I laboured over it so that you don't have to, and now it's all yours for free. Don't say I'm not good to you.

THE MAKINGS OF A GOOD PRESS RELEASE



Provided you have basic literacy skills, all you need to do is check off the following pointers and your press releases will dramatically improve. If writing's not your forte, don't worry: forward this article to your copywriter and politely ask them to read it before they get stuck in. (Or you could talk to me about my content creation service, which can include blog posts, guest articles and meticulously crafted press releases too).

1. MAKE IT NEWSWORTHY

You don't require major news to justify a press release. Do not think that unless your business has just been featured on Dragons' Den or you've won Entrepreneur of the Year your story isn't newsworthy. But at the same time, there has to be some kind of story in there. Journalists and publishers want an angle – so give them one. The more you can do their job for them (without making it obvious), the likelier they are to run with it. As the aphorism goes, “Dog bites man” isn't a story; “Man bites dog” is. By the same token “Acme Digital Media Co pass 100k Facebook likes” isn't particularly newsworthy. “Acme Digital Media Co celebrate 100k likes by giving away X” might just work however.

2. HOOK THEM WITH THE HEADLINE

The headline for your press release is crucial, for not only will it determine whether your email is even opened, but it will instantly tell the recipient what the story is about. A well written headline will a) hook its target b) convey the gist of the story c) require little editing to be used as the headline of the ensuing article. Just like the subject line to a newsletter, a strong headline for your press release is crucial. But one thing it can't be is click-bait. That's not how you get journalists onside.

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3. MAKE LIKE LOIS LANE



Lois Lane? That's right, Lois Lane. When she isn't swooning over Clark Kent, Metropolis' superhero sidekick is reporting for the Daily Planet. Write your press release in the style of a reporter – a good reporter that is, because let's face it, some reporters seem to nurse a hatred for the English language. The more professionally you can write your press release, the less work it will require to be tailored for publication and the likelier it is to be used. Reporters are pressed for time, underpaid and also lazy. Do their job for them and they'll be only too happy to hit publish and file it as their own work.

4. INCLUDE A KILLER QUOTE

There's nothing worse than a press release containing a quote from the CEO that was blatantly written by an intern. People aren't stupid: they can spot a rent-a-quote a mile off. This is the one opportunity you have to convey some semblance of warmth, humour or at least some kind of human emotion. Don't let it go to waste. Keep your tone professional in the body of the press release, but when it comes to the quote, make it sound like it was said by a real person and not a robot.

5. MAKE IT PERSONAL

The same press release might be going out to a dozen outlets, but that doesn't mean you should send each one the same generic covering email. Here you have a chance to personalise your message and make it sound like you chose that individual because it's a story you thought they'd be interested in. It's crucial that you come across as authentic here. Starting off with "I'm a big fan of your work..." is correctly going to be interpreted as phone-y. "I noticed you'd recently written about X and thought this story might be up your street" is much likelier to succeed.

CONCLUSION

And that's it: the five steps to writing a great press release. Naturally, you'll also want to make sure it's properly formatted, because journalists, like any profession, can be a judgmental bunch and if your press release looks like it was written by the work experience boy, they're apt to dismiss it outright. Thankfully, my ultimate press release template takes care of all that so you don't have to risk looking like a newb. Download it below, take my five commandments to heart and revel in the knowledge that you're officially now part of the 1%, that esoteric group whose press releases reach their final destination – the front page.

Don't read the news. Make it.

About Lilach Bullock

Highly regarded on the world speaker circuit, [Lilach Bullock](#) has graced Forbes and Number 10 Downing Street with her presence! In a nutshell, she's a hugely connected and highly influential serial entrepreneur – the embodiment of Digital Intelligence.



Listed in Forbes as one of the top 20 women social media power influencers and likewise as one of the top social media power influencers, she is one of the most dynamic personalities in the social media market and was crowned the Social Influencer of Europe by Oracle. A recipient for a Global Women Champions Award (by the Global Connections for Women Foundation, GC4W) for her outstanding contribution and leadership in business.

After launching her first business within three years of becoming a mother, her financial success was recognised by being a finalist at the Best MumPreneur of the Year Awards, presented at 10 Downing Street. Following a resultant offer and wishing to spend more time with her daughter, she sold her first business to focus on social media, developing a multi-site blog and online marketing portfolio that generated in excess of 600,000 + visitors per month.

Lilach is consulted by journalists and regularly quoted in newspapers, business publications and marketing magazines (including Forbes, The Telegraph, Wired, Prima Magazine, The Sunday Times, The Guardian, Social Media Today and BBC Radio). What's more, her books have achieved No 1 on Amazon for Sales and Marketing and Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

When Lilach isn't working she enjoys spending time with her family and is an avid fan of Zumba.