

WRITING A MEDIA RELEASE

A GUIDE FOR SMALL BUSINESS



TIPS FOR WRITING A GOOD MEDIA RELEASE

A very effective way in gaining attention for your business is to have other people spread the word for you. Traditional media, such as newspapers, magazines and radio, can often reach thousands of people at once.

Advertising is one tactic, another is to gain exposure on the “editorial side”, where information is viewed to be objective.

If you have a newsworthy announcement, take the time to send the information directly to the media, rather than expect them to come to you. Include as many relevant details as possible in a format that they can easily reference and copy. In other words, issue a media release.

A media release costs nothing but a little bit of time and effort, however, it can be one of the most effective ways of gaining exposure and attention.

There are rules to issuing an effective media release. The following guide will help you draft a media release, with tips on style and content, and advice on who to send it to.

STEP #1

DESCRIBE YOUR ANNOUNCEMENT IN ONE SENTENCE. IS IT WORTHY?

What is considered newsworthy differs greatly from one publication to the next. News is something new, up-to-the-minute and of interest to the readers. For example, if you have an opening, that’s not news – its an ad. If you are hiring 20 people because your business just expanded, that’s news.

If you have a newsworthy announcement, you should be able to describe it in one sentence: eg. “Our business is now open”. “Our business has moved.” “We have launched a new product/service.” “Tickets are now on sale.”

STEP #2

GATHER DETAILS

Gather details to support your announcement. Answer the basic questions as they pertain to the story at hand:

- Who owns the business?
- What is happening? What is being made?
- Where is the new business? Where is the event happening?
- Why did this happen? Why now?
- When did/will this happen?
- How much money has been invested? How many new jobs?

STEP #3

INCLUDE QUOTES

Provide quotes from the business owner, key employee.

News articles always include quotes from key people, so give the media what they want.

- Take some time to make sure the quote is on point and sounds natural.
- Keep the quote relatively short (a couple of sentences) and do not simply repeat facts.
- You can have more than one quote from more than one person.
- Attribute each quote to a specific person, and note their title.

10 BENEFITS OF WRITING A MEDIA RELEASE

1. Instant Exposure
2. Increased Sales Potential
3. The Chance to Boost the Effectiveness of Your Marketing Plan
4. The Opportunity to Brand Yourself as an Industry Expert
5. Increased Traffic to Your Website
6. Important SEO Benefits
7. A New Opportunity to Reach Your Targeted Audience
8. A Solid Relationship with Journalists
9. A Cost-Effective Method to Attract Deep-Pocketed Investors
10. The Perfect Occasion to Distribute Your Content Across Different Channels

*WWW.EXPRESSWRITERS.COM

STEP #4

ADD A PHOTO (OR TWO)

A picture says a thousand words. If you are launching a new product, provide the media with a photo. If you are opening a new business, use a photo of you and/or your employees. Make sure a hi-res version is sent digitally, along with an appropriate caption.

- The photo should be new and relevant, with good lighting.
- The subject of the photo should be singular and interesting.
- The photo should be high quality and in digital format.
- Don't use a vacation photo or a photo from 10 years ago.
- Generally, photos with people in them are more effective.
- The photo should not be overly commercial – avoid unnecessary use of logos.

STEP #5

PUT IT ALL TOGETHER

Make the journalist's job easier by writing the story as you would hope to see it in the paper. As such it should be written as objectively as possible.

- Label the document "Media Release" and date it clearly.
- Use a catchy title (headline).
- Generally, the most important facts should be in the first couple of paragraphs.
- Be objective and honest. Avoid hyperbole (eg. "we're the best").
- Write in the third person.
- Use short sentences, short paragraphs and keep the information simple and to the point.
- Quotes can be integrated in the story or added at the end.
- Try to keep the release to one page (400 words).
- Proofread for typographical or grammatical errors.
- Add your contact info (name, email, telephone) so that the journalist can contact you
- Add your website address and company logo

STEP #6

SEND TO MEDIA

Send the media release to the media via email. You can either include it in the body of the email or as a PDF attachment. Send the photograph as a separate digital file (JPG). You should time the release appropriately (eg. as you open your doors, the day event sales begin etc.).

- Send it to all local and regional media (print, radio etc)
- Send it to the local economic development office
- Send it to local business groups (eg. Chamber of Commerce)
- Send it to any special interest groups you may belong to (eg. industry association)
- Send it to suppliers/clients
- Send it early in the week if you can. Avoid sending it at the end of the business day.

Note: Respect the process. If you want the media to treat it as “news” then give it to them first. If you have already shared the info on your social media and it is a week old, the media will likely not share it.

LOCAL MEDIA CONTACTS

Standard-Freeholder

- Email: csf.news@sunmedia.ca

Seaway News

- Email: Nicholas.seebruch@tc.tc

The Seeker

- Email: info@theseeker.ca

Corus Radio

- Email: carrie.lalonde@corusent.com

YourTV

- Email: bill.makinson@cogeco.com

Cornwall Economic Development

- Choose Cornwall
bpeters@cornwall.ca
- Cornwall Tourism
klajoie@cornwall.ca
- Cornwall Business Enterprise Centre
ryan.kuhn@cornwall.ca

STEP #7

FOLLOW UP

You have not heard back from the media, and a story has not appeared within a week, follow up with a polite email offering to add clarity or answer any questions. It is possible that the media does believe the story is not newsworthy, which is their prerogative. Don't push too hard, and keep the doors open for next time.

STEP #8

INTEGRATE THE INFO

You will want to ensure that the same information in your media release is reflected on your website and social media channels. Make sure all of your content is up-to-date.

In many communities, media companies are under increasing pressure as the business model of delivering news is changing. Yet the role they play, delivering timely community information and news, continues to be important. Remember to support your local media wherever possible.



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