Press release style guide: How to write and share a press release

The following press release best practices and tips are designed to help you focus on the priority news your company has to discuss, and the most worthwhile opportunities to get your news in front of your target audiences.

Step 1: Why create a press release?

Press releases must outline a strategic direction that resonates with your audiences. Before you decide to announce news in (or even begin writing) a press release, ask yourself this: can this information be disseminated another way? In other words, can this information be shared via social media? What about a marketing email? Can you include it in an internal newsletter?

Think about the newsworthiness of your announcement. Did your startup just close a $30M round of funding? That's probably going to warrant a press release, while your announcement about a new head of HR might be best for a newsletter.

Also aim for a steady cadence of news announcements, about once per month - and only if you have determined that you have legitimate news. Otherwise, you can publish an announcement through your other marketing channels rather than distributing a press release over the wire.

Step 2: Get ready to write.

Once you've determined you should write a press release, follow this style guide.

Demonstrate newsworthiness

Your release must answer two questions: "Why should I read this now?" and "so what?" Your release will be quickly dismissed without a strong industry news angle or market relevance.

Here's how to structure your press release to convey the most important information quickly:

- **Paragraph one** = the most important news item or release summary

- **Paragraph two** = market validation and further company context

- **Paragraph three** = supporting market insight and validation

- **Paragraph four** = third-party quote

- **Paragraph five** = additional resources

A few questions to ask yourself while writing a press release are:

- Does this release extend your company's strategic vision?

- How is this news unique or different from what others are doing?

- What market need or demand is this news addressing?

Know your audience

Most people don't [read beyond the second paragraph](#) of a press release. So, not only is it important to get to the point, it's also key that you meet your reader's expectations.

This varies depending on your news, industry and stage of development. For all companies, can you include a customer quote or reference in the news release for validation? Are you a startup? It would be a good idea to include an investor's perspective. For medtech and pharmaceutical companies, reporters always want a patient or trial participant.

Think about a reporter who will write a news story based on your press release and anticipate what they'll need. More often than not, that's some form of third-party validation.

Craft a strong headline

Use title case when writing headlines. Use simple but effective (even bold) language and give yourself some options. Write at least five of the best headlines you can, then pick one.

Avoid clichés, jargon and dead phrases

Some once useful and accurate words and phrases have become so overused, they are virtually meaningless today. The following list was culled from journalists, bloggers and others who read many, many press releases and would rather not see any more uses of:

- award-winning
- best-of-breed
- cutting-edge
- disrupt
- game-changer
- giant
- groundbreaking
- innovative
- innovator
- leader
- leading
- mission-critical
- next-generation
- revolutionary
- robust
- seamless
- synergy
- turnkey
- the Uber for X
- value-added

Include images and multimedia

Consider including images – such as your logo, a screenshot, a headshot, product schematic or market-size graphs – with your release. Images will often help catch media's attention and provides them with additional content should they decide to share the news with their readers. You can also embed additional multimedia, such as video, in your release. Think about a short product demonstration or customer testimonial.

Keep your keywords in mind

Do your research and make sure that you select keywords that will improve your search engine optimization, yet are still relevant and fit naturally in your press release. Tools like [Google AdWords](#) and HubSpot will help with your research and [offer tips for identifying the right keywords](#). After you've done your keyword homework, don't forget to be specific with your placement. Make sure they appear in the headline, subhead and in the body copy.

Stay concise

Formatting matters. Use short paragraphs (no more than four lines for one sentence) and line breaks between paragraphs to make your release easier for the reader to digest quickly.

Remember to write like Hemingway. He conveyed layers of meaning with straightforward, staccato-like sentences, simple vocabulary and little embellishment. A Hemingway sentence like, "He was dead and that was all" could certainly be gussied up, but it would detract from rather than add to the power of the words.

Include quotes

Include quotes in your press release, and make sure they can stand alone. If they were shared without the rest of your release, would they convey the most important elements of your news? Avoid statements like, "We are excited," because it is naturally understood. People know you're excited enough to issue a press release, so use the quote to focus on a strategic message or astute market observation.

Link to your social media

Include links to your company's priority and active social media channels, such as LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook and YouTube. This encourages readers to follow you and stay up-to-date on company news.

Link to your website

In addition to placing links to your website in the contact section of your press release, place one to three appropriate links within the body of the release. These should be anchor text links using relevant keywords that drive readers to site pages or resources beyond your homepage.

Step 3: Get your news heard.

Now that you've written the perfect press release, make sure your target audiences see it.

Distribute your news.

When deciding where to distribute a press release, keep in mind that more is not always better. Take time to think about your target audience and who will be most interested in the news. Once determined, there are a variety of vendors available to assist with broad wire distribution, such as Business Wire, Newswise, PRWeb or Cision.

Choose your wire distribution vendor based on the media outlets you want to target, as well as whether or not you are sharing images or multimedia, and how much you can spend. Each vendor will allow you to select the types of media you would like to receive your news. Is your news specific to one state or region? Consider targeting distribution to that location. Is your news only going to be of interest to media that cover technology? Consider targeting distribution for that specific industry.

Beyond wire distribution, you want to distribute your news through your marketing channels. This includes emails to your applicable databases, posts to your social media profiles, a blog post, a website banner and more. Ensure you get to tell your story by personally contacting industry analysts and pitching key media contacts.

Want help with your next press release?

We're here for you: info@metiscomm.com.

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