



How to Write a Press Release

Craft a catchy headline. Make sure your opening sentence has a hook. Explain the details in the body of the release, meaning you explain why this matters.

These are the basic ingredients of a press release.

A press release is a formal written announcement that seeks to create interest at media organizations in telling the story it offers access to.

Below are three steps, three rules and one suggestion for your press release:

Steps

1. Create a catchy headline. It has to be OH SO GOOD. Reporters are bombarded with emails daily. Yours needs to stand out. Focus in on ACTION. Example: *League Launches Rockets*
2. Opening paragraph. Get to it right away. What's happening? Why? Who? When? Where? Do not embellish or write with flowery language. Keep to the facts. Do not echo your headline.
3. Body paragraph. Here's where you explain the first question any media organization will have: Why does this matter to our audience?

Rules

1. A good rule when thinking about framing your release is the golden rule of journalism itself. A story is: Someone + Doing Something + For a Reason

Ex: The Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues is shooting rockets into the sky to raise awareness about rockets.



Obviously this is a joke, but you can see the elements at work.

2. Access is key. If you send a release, the person listed as the contact and any people linked to the story **MUST** be available to respond.
3. Ask yourself: Is there really something of substance here? Organizations must consider if a desire for publicity that offers little actual story could harm their reputation with media organizations. If the answer isn't a resounding yes, perhaps reconsider the release.

Suggestion

1. Quotes. Many newbies to writing news releases sweat over adding a quote. If you don't know what to add, don't add a quote. Just send the basics. If your release is partially a statement on an issue, work out a quote that's no more than 20 or so words long. Keep it short, simple, tight.

EXAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

HEADLINE: **Ritchie Launches Rockets**

For immediate release—

OPENING PARAGRAPH: The Ritchie Community League is launching rockets into the sky at 3PM on June 15 to raise awareness about its program to send someone to space and encourage local residents to consider careers in hard sciences.

OPTIONAL QUOTE: “We may just be a small Community League but we’re very interested in sending shooting someone in a rocket to orbit the earth,” League president Pretend McFake said. “We didn’t want Jeff Bezos and Sir Richard Branson to be the only people sending others to space.”

NUTS AND BOLTS PARAGRAPH THAT ANSWERS BASIC WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE QUESTIONS: Media organizations are invited to observe the rocket launch from the League hall’s rooftop. The League will launch 12 rockets that were built by League volunteers over the course of the past 18 months. The rockets each weigh 15 pounds and will reach an altitude of 100,000 feet. The League’s space program was created to incentivize neighbourhood residents to consider careers in hard sciences.

OPTIONAL LOGISTICAL PARAGRAPH ABOUT MEDIA NEEDS: Ritchie’s president, Ms. McFake, will be available for interviews about the League’s space program before the event. Ritchie’s space program leader, former astronaut and current Ritchie resident Buzz McAstronaut, will be available at the event to explain the program in depth. McAstronaut will also be available for photographs and broadcast interviews.

OPTIONAL BACKGROUND PORTION THAT DRAWS INTEREST:

Rockets: 15 pounds each, capable of reaching 100,000 feet

Ritchie Community League: Founded in 1926, Ritchie is one of the city’s oldest Leagues

Ritchie’s space program budget: \$2,000

CONTACT INFO:

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