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**Writing a Good Press Release**

**Set Your Goals**

* Don’t start work on your release until you know what you are trying to accomplish.
* Who is the intended audience, and how will this reach them?
* What impact will this story have on them?

**Make it Newsworthy**

* You can’t reach your goals unless the media picks up your story.
* Think about the stories that make it onto TV, newspapers, radio, and social media.
* What about your story makes it news?
	+ Human interest, real individuals;
	+ Conflict and drama;
	+ New developments/information;
	+ Local impact;
	+ Something unusual, new, funny, shocking, etc.

**Use the Right Format**

* Keep it short – about 300 to 400 words. Do not make it longer than a short newspaper article: three or four short paragraphs, plus quotes. One page is best; never go longer than two.
* Put the date and the name, email and phone of the contact person at the top.
* Write it in the style of a newspaper article – so that the newspaper could run it with minimal changes. This accomplishes two key goals:
	+ Makes it easier and more appealing for the media outlet to use;
	+ Gives you more control over the final product.

**Write a Short, Engaging Headline**

* Short! No more than one line.
* Interesting. Imagine yourself reading the paper; what headline would make you want to read the article?
* Use this as the subject line for your email when you send the release, too.

**Make the First Paragraph Count**

* Your first paragraph, and first sentence, are critical. Assume that the editor, reporter, or reader will read no further.
* Include – very concisely! – all the key information in the first paragraph: the who, what, when, where, and why.

**Use Quotes Early and Often**

* Include one or more quotes early in the release – often put one after first paragraph.
* Don’t use quotes to convey dry information; use them to add insights and opinions and to reveal the human dimension in plain, emotionally affecting language.
* Feel free to draft quotes for people and have them edit or simply approve them. This is helpful in saving them time and getting them to respond, and in making sure that they cover the ground you want them to, especially if you are using multiple quotes.

**Convey Information**

* Hard data, facts, and statistics are good, if simply conveyed.
* Bullet-points are fine for conveying data.
* Include hyper-links so reporters and readers can easily learn more.

**Use a Boiler-Plate Paragraph**

* Include a boiler-plate paragraph at the end of releases explaining your organization and what it does. Edit it as needed for the context.

**Show it to a Second Reader**

* Have someone proofread it and tell you whether it is achieves your goals and is newsworthy.

**Personalize and Follow Up**

* Send it separately to reporters you know or whom you particularly want to cover it, with a brief note indicating why it might interest them.
* Call editors and reporters to make sure they saw it and to ask if they are able to cover it or have any questions about it.