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## STEPS TO A WRITING AN EFFECTIVE PRESS RELEASES

Want to get the most media attention and spotlight for your business? Then the first place to start is with a GREAT press release. Now I can almost see half of you leaving now, dreading the thought of having to write one of these. But wait!! I'm going to show you easy methods to make your press release work for you and get the attention it deserves. Ready? Let's go.

We'll briefly go over the basics because of their importance. Editors want to see things done the RIGHT way. I would bet that a lot of good releases simply get tossed out just because they aren't set up properly. To a busy editor, that all too familiar "10 second glance" says a lot for you and your business; it let's them know if you've done your research enough to warrant that release to be placed in their newspaper or magazine.

Here are your essentials:

"FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE" on the top left of the page.

Your contact name, phone number, e-mail address, and website follows.

Headline is next, normally in bold and centered on the page. Summarize what the release is about and capture their attention. Spend almost as much time on your headline as you do writing the release. It's that important.

The press release body starts with the location of the release and the date (Margate, Florida, May 5, 2005.)

Most press releases are between 200-500 words, and no more than a page. The first paragraph has the most important information. Don't save the best for last, it won't get read. In this paragraph answer the questions, who, what, when, where and why?

It is recommended that you write press releases in the 3rd person and use short sentences and paragraphs. Do not go over board, trying to dazzle the editor, it won't work.

Target your release. You will be sending your release to a specific audience so make sure that in your release you keep to what would appeal to that audience. What don't they know that you can add? Nothing works better than getting an "AAH HAA" when an editor is reviewing your release.

Provide statistics. Do some research and find some relevant information that applies. You can easily do this through Google. Once you find your quote, do a Google search or Yahoo quote on that particular topic. However, don't stop on the first Google link and take that for gospel. Research it a bit further. Have it come from a respectable company or magazine.

Include relevant quotes from experts in your field that will reinforce what you are saying. Approach authors, leaders in your industry, and other experts that back up the facts you are stating in your release. They will normally appreciate the added publicity and you get the quote you're looking for. For example, as an author I'll often get asked to provide a quote for an article on home-based businesses or the virtual assistant industry. I welcome the opportunity as it provides me more publicity.

Also, if you have a satisfied client that you feel will add credibility to your Release, add a quote from them as well. The first time you mention the expert, write out their full name. Then list them by last name or Mr. and Mrs. Smith only. I normally prefer the last name.

The last paragraph should be your call to action. You've talked the whole release about your business or product, now tell them what to do with the knowledge they just acquired.

At the bottom of the release include ### to indicate you are done, followed by a short bio. Make sure if you include your website that you include http:// in front of it for search engine recognition.

Your bio should include your information, any books authored, etc. Double check this for accuracy. At this point, you're tired and done with the Release. But if it goes out to the world with the wrong web address, the valuable time spent even writing the Release has been wasted.

That's it! The basics for writing a press release. Now one other thing I'd like to add in, they work! They truly work. I've had a recent release get accepted by PRWeb (and yes they do reject bad ones!), and then go on to hit several other major newspapers and media outlets and the Google alert, which resulted in our paper in the area contacting me. You want to set up a Google news alert for your name so that you can follow the path and see when you make the news so you can follow up. Also, PRWeb at <http://www.prweb.com> has complete guidelines for setting up a good press release. Go with the extra money and spend \$20.00. It's worth it to get the additional exposure.

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