

10 Things Journalists Want From A Press Release

Social Media may be at the cutting edge of business communication today, but there are still times when you need to let the media know about something you're up to. This is when it helps to remember the art of the expertly crafted **Press Release**.

Journalists see 100s of Press Releases every week and know what they're looking for.

Here are 10 of those things:-

1. Correct use of grammar and good spelling. Print journalists live and breathe spelling and grammar and there is nothing more off-putting than glaring mistakes.
2. Don't write anything you would not be prepared to see in print. Your Press Release is a public document and may be quoted verbatim. Local papers are often so hard pressed they will print it without re-writing; by which time it is too late if you realise something is inaccurate.
3. Answer all the questions the journalist may have. Who, Where, What, Why, When. If they call you for more information that is great, but you want to provide as much as you can in one go.
4. Who are you writing for? Unless it is a highly technical, specialist publication, keep your information simple and avoid jargon. You can always provide technical data or links to online articles in notes at the bottom of the main release.
5. **What is the story?** This is crucial. Unless you are after one sentence in a "What's on?" guide you need to provide something that will compel the journalist to put you in the paper. They are not there to provide businesses with free publicity, they are there to tell stories and engage readers' interest. So think hard. Is one of the speakers at your conference famous? Have they got a fascinating back story about their struggle for success? If you are after publicity for your new enterprise can you add comment about an on-going news issue in your niche? Tell them about it.
6. Case studies. Linked to Number 5. Can you offer a subject for interview? For example, the famous speaker at your conference? Is there a great story about how your concierge service saved the day for some poor woman whose party was nearly wrecked? This will greatly increase your chances of getting in the paper. Remember: if your subject is not available for interview in person, you could do it yourself and attach your Question and Answer session to the Press Release.
7. Make it as human as possible. People are interested in other people and not things.
8. Send it out in good time BEFORE your event. Journalists use press releases to build up a forward planning diary. If it has already happened then they don't usually want to know.
9. Follow up with a call. The day before the event they will have an idea of how they are going to deploy their resources. If they have decided not to send a reporter/photographer to your event they might still be interested, particularly if you can provide them with pictures and a short write up.
10. No more than one side of A4 please!

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