



Six simple steps for writing an effective media release

By Carly Lubicz

It's a frustrating situation: Starting-up a business leaves you so cash-strapped that you can barely afford a marketing budget, but without anyone knowing about your product or service how will you succeed?

The most cost-effective way of getting media attention is through a media release (otherwise known as press release). A media release is a Word document or PDF that concisely contains your exciting business happenings in a news story form. There is no guarantee that your information will run because the space is not paid for like an advertisement, but there are several things you can do to make it more appealing to time-strapped journalists.

1. **Have an angle:** Ensure your information is “newsworthy” – journalists don't want their inboxes clogged with material that is of no use to them. You need to find an interesting angle: Have you launched a new product or invention that has never been seen in the local market? Are you registering record growth despite the difficult climate? Do you have an insightful comment to contribute to a topical issue? Try to detach yourself from your business and ask yourself as an outsider, “Is this really interesting?”
2. **Consider your audience:** Where do you want your media release to appear? Ensure the angle and tone appeals to your audience and the publications/news outlets you send it to are interested in the topic.
3. **Include the particulars:** Make sure you include the date on your media release, your contact details, your logo at the top (for branding), an attention-getting headline, and a caption if you are supplying an image. Content-wise, provide the key information of who, what, when, where, why and how.
4. **Images:** Supply a photo with your information wherever possible. It's better to use a professional photographer, but if you can't justify the cost, ensure you take the shot from different angles and orientations (i.e. horizontal and vertical). Make sure the camera is set on the highest quality image setting – newspapers need images at 200 dpi and magazines need 300 dpi.
5. **Consider deadlines:** Find out when the publications go to print or what time the broadcast media need the information by. When is it best to get information to them to make their life easier?
6. **Follow-up:** Depending on the content of the media release and the timeliness of the information, you will need to follow-up either immediately or within days. Journalists are bombarded with information and your email may have got lost in their inbox. However, don't overdo it: If you have made a couple of calls and you've had no reply, assume they aren't interested and move on.

Carly Lubicz is the owner of Calculated Media – a freelance journalism, business copy writing and publicity service based in Townsville. She has worked in the media for 10 years as a journalist, sub-editor and editor and loves helping small to medium-sized businesses get noticed. Visit www.calculatedmedia.com.au or call 0407 385 516 for more information.

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