



Finding an angle for your first media release

- ❖ Publicity is supposedly seven times more effective than advertising.
- ❖ Even better - it is free if you do it yourself!
- ❖ Capture the attention of journalists and you can cash in on the free editorial coverage.
- ❖ Here is a simple plan to put together a good media release.

Finding a good angle

First and foremost - you must have something interesting to say. Consider your unique selling proposition (USP). Just like in sales, you are selling a story idea to the media. So it really needs to be compelling, more than simply an advertisement or a product plug.

- ❖ Another element to consider to really hook the journalist is the *emotional selling point* (ESP). Often it is the human interest element of the story that will capture attention.
- ❖ What is your background?
- ❖ Have you overcome any obstacles to get where you are today?
- ❖ What are your achievements or milestones?
- ❖ Something quirky or different about how you started your business

What's more compelling?

- ❖ An announcement about a wedding limousine service, or
- ❖ The 30th anniversary both in marriage and business of the couple who run the service?

In this example, the couple went on to get a free full page editorial including a colour photo in a wedding supplement in their local paper!

What's in it for the journalist's readership?

Write in reverse - a good angle first, your message second. You need to make it clear how your product or service can help others.

What's more compelling?

- ❖ "Small businesses now have a better way to measure, monitor and manage the costs involved in running their business, thanks to Jones & Smith's new online measurement and analysis accounting system", or
- ❖ "Jones & Smith Accountants today announced the launch of their revolutionary new accountancy software package..."

The heading

Write a catchy headline that is short and punchy to grab the reader's attention. Observe how headings are written in newspapers and magazines. If you are planning to email your media release, the same principles apply. Use a compelling, proactive subject heading or the journalist might simply hit delete.

The content

Instead of the conventional beginning “XYZ company today announced that”, you should start with a strong, compelling lead paragraph. As editors and journalists get so many media releases every day, you only have seconds to grab their attention.

It helps to consider the 5 W’s: Who, What, When, Where and Why. This is an easy formula to remember when deciding how to write a media release, but you will still need to add some “zing” or compelling elements to hook the reader in.

- ❖ Don’t forget to highlight the benefit to the reader and perhaps include some “how to” tips relating to your product or service.
- ❖ Using memorable quotes, either from yourself or someone well-known who can endorse your product can make the story seem more real or human.
- ❖ A good quote can include why you’ve started your business or developed your product or how it helps your target audience.

The format

- ❖ Title your document “Media Release” and include the date and your contact details, including telephone, mobile, email and website address. Be prepared for contact, you might need to be available at short notice so don’t offer a mobile phone contact point and then turn it off!
- ❖ Use letterhead and keep content to one page: more and you will lose the journalists’ attention.
- ❖ When using email, cut and paste into the body of the email, don’t send an attachment or the chances are it won’t be opened.

The contact

- ❖ As well as knowing how to write a release, you also need to know who to send it to and via what method. Check the protocol for the media you have chosen - it is usually stated on their website.
- ❖ Be sure to do your research and re-check the name and direct email address of the most appropriate person. Check that the food editor is still just that and not now the finance editor.
- ❖ Always follow up with a phone call or email and keep your media liaison consistent. If you provide good information you are not a nuisance, you are providing a service. Journalists and editors need our information to fill their newspapers, magazines and radio shows.
- ❖ It can also be beneficial to supply a creative photo or suggest a photo opportunity that will add to the impact of having your information publicised.
- ❖ Make sure the promotional materials that support your story are up-to-date and in sufficient supply for reader enquiries. This applies to current material on your website as well.

Go to it!!

Knowing how to write a media release will help you gain publicity and become known as an expert in your business field. This is a great way to enhance your reputation and help your business grow!

Kind regards,

