



How to Write a Media Release

While there are many ways of informing the media, the distribution of a Media Release is still the most effective way to notify them of an upcoming event or an important issue.

A Media Release is a short, concise and effective way of drawing the media's attention to your event, story or issue. It also provides you with free publicity.

Journalists usually receive hundreds of Media Releases each day. For your release to be noticed, the headline and first paragraph must catch their attention. You should spend as much time getting the words right in the headline and first paragraph as you do in preparing the rest of the release.

To be effective, your media release should be:

- Concise:** Get to the point without rambling. Use short sentences and paragraphs.
- Clear:** Use plain English and avoid jargon, clichés and acronyms. Don't use technical terms without explaining what they mean. Write the copy or text in the third person and use quotes wherever possible.
- Accurate:** Check your facts, details, spelling and grammar. Date the release clearly.
- Easy to read:** Make it interesting, and use positive words, phrases and quotes
- Complete:** Do not leave out vital information. List all contact information, including after-hours and mobile numbers. This will make it easier for journalists to contact you and your organisation thus ensuring a better chance of your story being published.

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What Makes a Good Media Release?

- The heading should summarise the story in no more than 6 - 8 words.
- The first paragraph should always contain the following information: WHAT will happen, WHERE it will take place, WHY it is occurring, WHEN it will happen, HOW and to WHOM.
- Lead with your most interesting point. Other points you wish to make should be placed in order of importance.
- Keep the media release short – ideally, limit it to one page.
- To ensure that your release goes directly to the appropriate people, write the names of the relevant editors, journalists or chiefs-of-staff at the top of the release before you email or fax it through.
- Include the name, addresses and contact numbers of your group on the media release, preferably at the bottom of the page.
- Timing is important for the media. If you are organising an event, send your media release at least two weeks beforehand. This will give the media enough time to do some research, if needed, and schedule it into their diaries.
- Always follow up a media release with a phone call. Be brief and to the point making sure you summarise the story in one or two sentences.
- Local newspapers often look for a good photo opportunity. If you are planning an event, think of how you could set up an interesting photo. Let the media know by giving them details of the photo opportunity at the end of your media release.

Once you have written the media release, send it off to those listed in your Media Contact Book. Alternatively, you can access these details via the internet.

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