How to write a press release

A press release, sometimes also referred to as a media release, is a written statement used to share information with members of the press. The purpose of a press release is to inform journalists about a new product, business, or event and to convince them that it is newsworthy.

Public Relations (PR) companies are often employed to write press releases and sell-in stories to publications on behalf of organisations. Employing such a company can be an effective way to raise your profile, but their services can also be expensive. If you can't afford to employ a PR, you can write your own press release by following these simple steps:

Layout

- **Format** – Keep it simple and stick to a Word document or PDF when creating your document. Use bullet points to highlight key facts and break down lengthy copy.

- **Length** - A press release should be no more than two sides of A4 including pictures. Key information should be on the first page and as high up the release as possible.

- **Distribution date** – Ensure that the date at the top is the day the press release is sent out. It may be kept on file so it's important for journalists to see whether information is current.

- **Release date** - If your press release is intended for publication on a certain date, ensure that you write 'Embargoed until' and insert the date in large writing at the top of the page.

- **Heading** - Think of it as a newspaper headline i.e. attention grabbing but factual. A good heading will encourage people to read on.

- **Opening paragraph** – Summarise your message in the opening paragraph – what, when, who, where, why? What is the product, service or event; when and where is it being launched or happening; who is the person or company behind it and why is it exciting?

- **Quote** – Always try to include a quote as where possible journalists like hearing from people. The quote usually forms the third paragraph of a press release. Ensure that any quote is relevant and you have permission from the person you're quoting.

- **Images** – Adding images is particularly important if you are promoting a product or visual work. Ensure that any images you are compressed to avoid making your file huge. You can also attach images to your email but keep any unsolicited emails to 2MB - preferably much less.

- **Notes to Editors** – A 'Notes to Editors' section at the end of your press release is an opportunity for you to provide more detail or technical information that is too boring for the main release. It's good to include a brief synopsis on your company in this section too.

- **Contact details** – Make sure that people can get hold of you for information by including your name, contact telephone number and email address.

- **Language** - Be aware of the power of key words (e.g debut, premiere, exclusive) and delete redundant words to make the press release as concise as possible. It's also important that you write for the market/audience your product/service/event is aimed at.
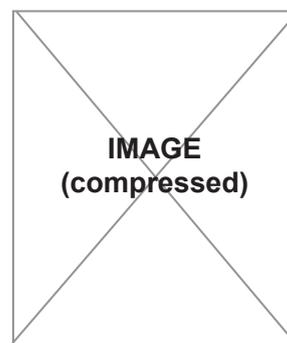
Template

EMBARGOED UNTIL DD MM YYYY

Snappy heading in large writing

Paragraph one: summary - who, what, when, where, why?

IMAGE (compressed)

Paragraph two: more detailed information.

Paragraph three: quote from a relevant person.

Paragraph four: more detailed information.

Paragraph five: closing paragraph.

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

Insert any technical/detailed information that is too boring for the main release.

Provide an overview of your company and any other parties involved in the project. It's also useful to include a link to company websites where possible.

Further information:
Please contact INSERT NAME, JOB TITLE, COMPANY NAME
Telephone: INSERT TELEPHONE NUMBER
Email: INSERT EMAIL ADDRESS