



Press Release Workshop

May 15, 2017



The “Press Release” and how it can benefit your business...

- The purpose of a press release is to get attention, make news, and generate publicity.
- Press releases are cost effective marketing (free) and can be used to create brand awareness, build credibility for your business and facilitate growth and expansion
- Press releases can be used to announce a new product, company milestone or accolade or highlight a newsworthy trend.



Press Release Writing Best Practices

- Use an attention-grabbing headline
- The first paragraph should include the most pertinent information
- Make it newsworthy; it's **not** an ad, it's a news article
- Be time sensitive – no one wants old news
- Stick to one topic
- Write it in a professional tone, or even better, write it like you're a reporter
- Proofread it and then have someone else proofread it and then proofread it again



Key Components of a Press Release

- Include a company logo and link to your website
- Date - For Immediate Release” under the date
- Headline: Should grab attention of editor; Limit it to 15 words
- Subtitle (optional): Keep it short
- Lead paragraph: Your organization’s location (city, state) in bold type and the 5 Ws (who, what, when, why, where) of the story
- 2nd Paragraph: Supportive information and at least one quote
- Other paragraphs: Additional, relevant, non-essential information
- Call to Action: An exact, complete, non-embedded URL (**not** “[Click Here](#) to visit website”) in one of the paragraphs
- Conclusion: A brief description of your organization
- Media Contact Information: Name, email, phone, and website



A Press Release Should Not...

- Ideally, be longer than 1 page
- Have a lot of formatting
- Be excessively detailed or wordy
- Include exclamation points (unless it's a direct quote)
- Exaggerate or mislead
- Use the words: I, we, our, me



Distributing a Press Release

- Develop a media contact list of people you will send the release to based on your target audience and location
- Use email or twitter as your method of outreach. You can generally get this from website contact page or call the main desk of most outlets to get this information.
- Media lists can include a variety of print, online, TV, magazine and bloggers but should be relevant to their coverage
- Send the release to an actual person, or at least to a specific news department via email.
- One follow-up email is considered appropriate.
- Use a detailed subject line in your email (including “Story Idea” is a good way to ensure they read it)
- Post the release on your website
- Share the release on social media as well as any media pick-up you receive
- Send to Colorado Wine Board team/Courtney Lis for inclusion in wider marketing efforts if appropriate. Courtney@vocapr.com
- A reporter/editor may be interested in doing a follow-up interview or request images or additional information – be sure you have this available
- You can also put press releases out over the wire – this is a paid service primarily used to reach a broad audience and facilitate SEO (search engine optimization)



Types of Media Encounters

- **COMPANY ANNOUNCEMENT:** You have something to announce. Your company is the news.
- **YOU ARE AN EXPERT:** The press talks to you because you are an expert on a topic.
- **THE UNEXPECTED CRISIS:** You are dealing with the press because of unexpected bad news or problems. You must respond immediately, frequently with limited knowledge.
- **ANTICIPATED CRISIS:** You are dealing with the press because of bad news that was anticipated. You have had time to prepare. You may even have the option of announcing the problem yourself.
- **LITIGATION:** In some cases, attorneys limit your discussion with the reporter. Lawyers often discourage you from discussing the specifics of a legal charge. Examples include a settlement with a former employee, rumors regarding acquisitions or mergers, projections about specifics such as stock price, etc.



Interview Do's...

- Remember YOU are the expert
- Repeat the question in your answer
- Use numbers and statistics
- Use forward looking statements
- Mention your company name and website
- Answer the entire question
- Return to the key messaging points
- Use the reporter's name
- Speak in quotable, short sound bites
- Be friendly, pleasant and funny
- Tell them you will get back to them if you don't know the answer or feel uncomfortable with a question
- Be concise, clear and comprehensive
- Use positive "key" words or descriptive words and phrases that you want to be identified the company



Newspaper/Online/Magazine

- Ex: *Denver Post*, *Denver Business Journal*, *5280*, etc.
- Most newspaper or online interviews are conducted over the phone
- They are generally a short 15-20 minute discussion with a reporter
- They are looking for trends, stats and anecdotes to craft their headline
- Print media tends to do the most research for their articles so offer third party support whenever possible
- Most articles are focused on the latest market news and they are looking for current information and stats
- Reporters are looking for two or three quotes they can include in their article
- Because the newspaper industry is in such peril, space is very limited
- Editors are looking to you as the expert and will craft their story angle based on your interview responses
- EVERYTHING you say is on the record
- Do not embellish answers... keep them accurate, clear and to the point
- Answer all questions to the best of your knowledge or tell them you will get back to them with the information they are requesting if you don't know the answer
- Never say "No Comment"



TV Interviews



- Ex: KUSA 9News, Fox 31, KMGH-Channel 7, CBS-4
- Segment Options:
 - Remote/Live Shots: Interview is conducted live from a remote location during the newscast
 - In-studio interview: Anchor asks questions face-to-face or face-to-camera
 - Pre-taped packages: Often a feature story and is edited with a variety of sound bites and shots
- Most TV segments are 2-3 minutes in length
- TV is all about entertainment; even when the news is hard hitting, producers want charismatic, intelligent and witty interviewees
- TV segments are usually news driven, trend or tip oriented
- Any gesture you make on TV is amplified tenfold
- Audience is mainstream
- Remain positive, humorous and professional



Broadcast Tips

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW:

- Remember: YOU are the expert
- Take several deep breaths before interview
- Do not memorize answers
- Prepare thoughtful answers in bulleted format
- Make eye contact (either camera or producer)
- Wear solid colors... never wear white or stripes/polka dots

DURING THE INTERVIEW:

- Speak in short and concise sound bites
- Use numbers and statistics (in context)
- Spin things positively
- Be pleasant and funny
- Do not move your head or make large movements
- Be natural
- Be clear and concise
- Be confident and in control
- Do not use jargon not easily understood by public



Radio Interviews

- Ex: 850 KOA, Colorado Public Radio, etc.
- Either an in-studio interview or over the phone via the radio hotline
- Q/A style interview with radio host
- Generally news or trend focused
- Segments are 2-4 minutes in length
- Questions tend to be direct and highly specific
- Answers should be comprehensive, clear and concise but not memorized
- Personality needs to come out in your voice



VOCA

5 Tips to Crafting the Perfect Quote

1. **MEMORY WORDS** – Descriptive words that identify brand and stick in our brains.
2. **USE STATISTICS** – Reporters love numbers. However, numbers are meaningless without being put into context. Too many numbers are confusing, and although the listener will remember a few, they may not be the ones you want stressed.
3. **FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS** – Reporters love predictions. As an expert, your opinion on trends, future conditions or actions is respected and valid.
4. **HAVE A “TARGETED MESSAGE”** – As listeners, we absorb and recall information that specifically refers to us.
5. **USE “CUES”**– The beginning and end are the most memorable points in any response. EXAMPLES: “The most important point to remember is...” “The real issue is...” “To sum it all up...” “Our customers need to know...” “The community should be assured that...”



Interview Do NOT's...

- Be defensive or patronizing
- Say “No Comment”
- Use phrases that can be twisted or misinterpreted
- Don’t make promises or guarantees
- Use industry jargon
- Answer a question you don’t know the answer to
- Answer a question that makes you uncomfortable
- Use clichés
- Use um, uh, like
- Use long, wordy answers that are off topic
- Be overly paranoid about reporter’s intention
- Mention the competition unless necessary
- Do not use any negative memory words that can be associated with the brand.
- Avoid words that have a negative connotation. Remember, negative expressions or messages crowd out positive ones.